Column by Don McGregor • An Interview with Michael Fleisher • and much more inside . . .

The Comic Times

Issue # 1 July, 1980 $2.00

©1980 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

But seriously now folks...

Let's get serious about a light subject: CARTOONS. Lots of cartoons are funny, it's true (and we've got hundreds of humor cartoons and sight gags in our great new book). But there's a whole other world of editorial and political cartoons, sports cartoons, advertising cartoon art, not to mention animated cartoons and caricatures. And for the first time anywhere, Chelsea House has accumulated **a thousand different examples** of the most rare, most famous, most unique, most representative, and most beautiful pieces of cartoon art from **all over the world.** That's why we call this cross-referenced 800-page alphabetically organized reference book, packed with fun and facts,

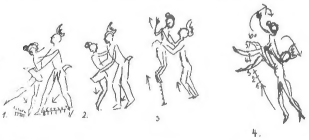
THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARTOONS.

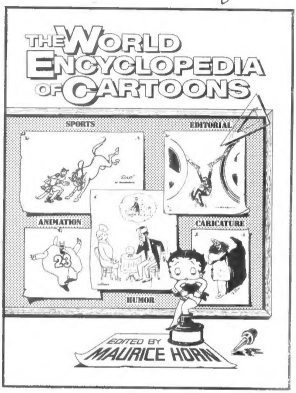
And if it sounds familiar, that's because it is, in fact, a companion volume to Maurice Horn's WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF COMICS, published by Chelsea House in 1976 (which sold 50,000 copies in hardcover). The inimitable Mr. Horn (a.k.a. The Cosmic Comic Authority) headed a score of editors, researchers, and artists from around the world for three years to produce THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARTOONS. $39.50

As we did with the Comics Encyclopedia, we are issuing a two-volume, 900-page collector's edition packed with 100 pages of additional material in appendices, articles, and full-page facsimiles of entire issues of **Puck** (1887), **Judge** (1902), and **Life** (1925). $60.

THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CARTOONS

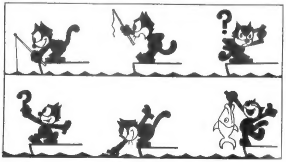
CHELSEA HOUSE PUBLISHERS 70 W. 40 St. New York 10018





Here's the data:

1200 alphabetical entries
Cartoonists and cartoon titles
A thousand illustrations
64 pages in full color
Big 9" x 12" format
History of animation, humor, cartoon magazines
Chronology of cartoon development
Glossary
Bibliography
Extensive index, appendix
Humor
Editorial
Political
Sports
Caricature
Syndicated panels
Animation in film and video



CHELSEA HOUSE PUBLISHERS
70 W. 40 St. New York 10018

1-volume edition:
Reserve _____ copies @ $39.50 each.

2-volume collector's edition:
Reserve _____ sets @ $60 each.

Please include $2.50 postage & handling for each book or set ordered. New York residents add 8% sales tax. No C.O.D.s.

Enclosed is a check or money order for $_____
Charge my Visa/Master Charge number _____
Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

Zip

The Comic Times

Issue # 1 **July, 1980** **$2.00**

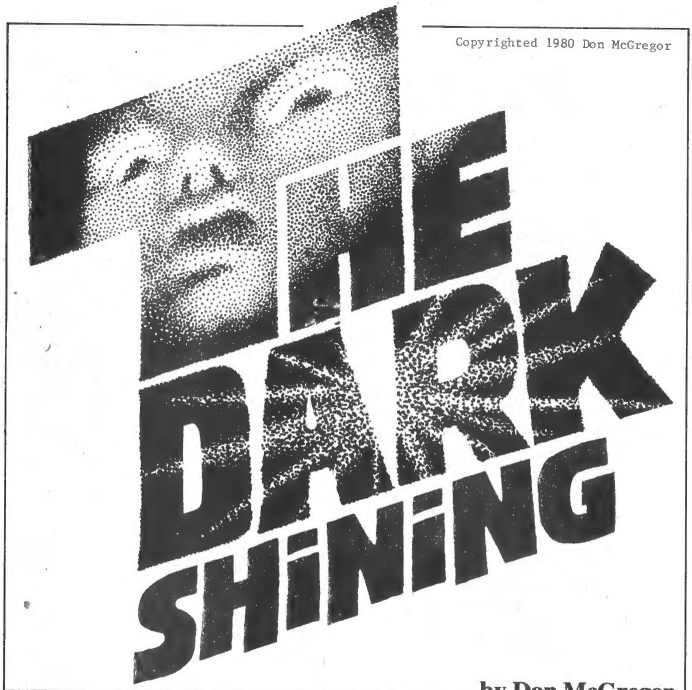
PUBLISHER
The Comic Times, Inc.
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Dennis Cieri
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Mark Gasper
MANAGING EDITOR
David M. Singer
MEDIA EDITOR
James H. Burns
COLUMNIST
Don McGregor
STAFF WRITERS
Jerry Beck
Alice Garrison
Andy Helfer
Winslow O'Brien
Jim O'Connor
Mark Sparger
Alan Squier
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Joe Jusko
David Konige
Owen Long
Chris Pape
Steve Man Kong
PRODUCTION
Owen Long, Manager
Andy Helfer
Carol Nicholls
Tom Orzechowski
FRONT COVER
The Marvel Bullpen
BACK COVER
Joe Jusko

The Comic Times is published monthly by The Comic Times Inc. 305 B'way N.Y.,N.Y.10007
Entire contents copyrighted for Individual artist by The Comic Times 1980 TM
Front Cover copyrighted The Marvel Group 1980
Back Cover copyrighted by Joe Jusko 1980. Character copyrighted by Warren Pub. 1980

CONTENTS

THE DARK SHINING..... 4
A less than glowing review of *The Shining* by Don McGregor
MARVEL NEWS.....16
DC NEWS.....20
INDEPENDENT PRESS.....22
THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.....26
Andy Helfer strikes back in this review of the *Star Wars* sequel.
THE LEGENDARY JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA...36
A brief history of the last days of the *JSA* by David M. Singer.
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN.....42
Did *Spidey* survive his leap from book to strip? Jim O'Connor lets us know.
THE JAMES BURNS MEDIA REPORT.....44
The films that are coming soon to a theatre near you.
CHATTING WITH MICHAEL FLEISHER.....51
David M. Singer interviews the guiding light behind *Jonah Hex* and *Ghost Rider*.
MASTER OF REALITY.....69
"Now I lay me down to sleep."
THE KIRBY EXPERIMENT.....70
David M. Singer tells us why the Marvel method failed at DC.
WHIZ & THE KID.....73
It's only trivial if you live somewhere else.
THE MARVEL CHECKLIST.....74
JOE JUSKO, A NEW TALENT.....78
Meet the man behind our back cover. An interview by Mark Gasper.

Copyrighted 1980 Don McGregor



by Don McGregor

Stanley Kubrick does not make likeable movies; they are not films one takes to the heart and embraces; nor are they easily defined films, for they are ambitious, complex, ambiguous in their final intent, and disturbing when he is at his best.

In most of Kubrick's films the characters are almost negligible, it is the events of which they are a part that dominate, and the participants are trapped in vast circumstances of time and place.

Kubrick seldom supplies a strong lead for the audience to sympathize, empathise or identify with. In most cases the acts that the people are involved in veer towards obsession and lunacy (*Paths of Glory*; *Dr. Strangelove*) or violent compulsion and passionless narcissism (*A Clockwork Orange*; *Barry Lyndon*).

You don't, literally, care what happens to the people in a Kubrick film, not as individuals, but you are battered by the brutalities they undergo. Kubrick's films often leave the impression of viewing a laboratory dissection, remote, clinical, as layer after layer of epidermis is stripped away from some nameless animal, except in Kubrick's cases the nameless animals are human beings.

You may revel in Kubrick's visual dexterity, you may applaud his craftsmanship of celluloid, you may tip the hat at the exquisite use of color in his films (He is a master of color coordinates, design patterns and the juxtaposition of warm and cold colors to vary the emotional imagery of alternating sequences.), but the odds are that, after all the admiration, you will not like or enjoy much of what you are watching.

If you are not Stanley Kubrick, with

ALL PHOTOS COPYRIGHT WARNER BROTHERS 1980

several films attaining cult status, it is difficult to get away with such behavior.

If you are Stanley Kubrick it can still cause a few twinges in the old oblongata when commercial success doesn't ride alongside the crest of critical raves.

When the lavishly produced Barry Lyndon failed to become the box office smash of 1975 it had been hoped it would be, it is obvious that Kubrick decided to retrench, look for a solid commercial property, and went slumming with pop horror novelist, Stephen King and *The Shining*.

There is nothing easy about a Kubrick film, in design or intent.

With the release of The Shining, Kubrick has stirred his usual hornet's nest of critical hyperbole in praise and condemnations. There seems to be no middle group, and yet, if Kubrick's name were not attached to *The Shining*, it hardly seems likely that anyone would take it any more seriously than another cruel occult slaughter film, in the vein, say, of *It's Alive*, *The Omen*, *Audrey rose*, etc.

The Shining has a visual mastery these other films do not obtain, but the film caters to the same morbid whim of innocent victims and spilled blood. Kubrick actually uses gallons of gore effects to rush out of elevator doors in a tidal wave of blood. A huge budget lets you do things up big.

The Shining is a return for Kubrick to straight genre with easily defined characters. In fact, Kubrick seems so disinterested in the father, mother and son that spend an isolated winter in a huge, traditionally demonic mountain retreat that he does not bother to define much of their pasts or any of their intimate moments

together or even the daily routines that become a part of any family.

There is a heartless quality about much of popular horror novels and movies these days, an emphasis on cruelty as entertainment, especially if the cruelty is perpetrated by, or threatened to, children. *The Shining* juggles this mixture for shock effect.

Now, Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* deals with violent, antisocial, psychotic behavior, but not merely as a vehicle for shock or cheap thrills. The violent imagery and complex social theme of that film conceals the framework of a formula comic book narrative.

Think not?

Well, friends, consider the central plotline. We witness a gang of toughs who, in succession, beat up an old man, rape the wife of a writer, before they turn on each other and feud amongst themselves over who should be boss. When the gang members betray their current leader, Alex (Malcolm McDowell), he becomes a ward of society in its prison system, and an experiment in another modern rehabilitation program that supposedly will nullify his violent and sexual instincts. Although why violence and sex are linked as equally undesireable is beyond me. Upon his release Alex immediately finds himself displaced by his father and mother, and accidentally meets the old man he led his gang into slamming about at the beginning of the film. The old man summons a gang of elderly bums to stomp and thrash the now non-violent, helpless Alex. Immediately after the mauling, two policemen show up, who coincidences of coincidences, happen to be two previous members of Alex's gang of droogs. Promptly they take him to a deserted area, beat the shit out of him until the viewer winces, and then leave him to crawl about the countryside until he ends up, of all places (You guessed it!) at the writer's house.

All of this would fit easily in a horror comic except for the power and immediacy of each sequence and what it attempts to examine about society's desire for easy, miracle cures and solutions to problems that are not that simplistically rectified.

In *A Clockwork Orange*, Kubrick's subtlety may have betrayed him and the novelist, Anthony Burgess. I had not known when I first saw the film that, in real life, Burgess's wife was raped during a blackout in the second World War, and that she died of the injuries sustained during that tragedy. The emotional factors in such a brutal consequence are tremendous; the hurt, pain, rage, the senselessness of losing a loved one to such insane, outside forces. These must have been factors that were part of Burgess during the formulative and execution stages of his novel.

A Clockwork Orange became a cult film during the late seventies, playing at revival film houses to midnight audiences, and I wonder if Kubrick's ambiguous nature didn't betray him a bit. Did those audiences turn Alex into a tragic hero since it is his burtalization and humiliation that Kubrick lingers on and not the effects on Alex's rape victims or gang muggings?

Now, I know that the creators cannot predict how everyone in their audience will interpret their work. I don't mean to suggest that. In the mid-seventies I was writing a comic series called *The Black Panther* for Marvel Comics. One chapter of "Panther's Rage" was titled, "The God Killer," which I thought spoke quite specifically about the point in the lives of most human beings when we look at and examine the teachings of our childhood and see what we consider still valid and what we will reject. In effect, we all have the capacity to be "The God Killer," and none of us should go through our lives without questioning.

Yet, one reader interpreted the story quite differently. He sent a letter saying he would bomb the Marvel Comics offices over the Thanksgiving holidays since he was convinced that my story advocated all blacks killing all whites.

Ye-ouch!

It's difficult to figure the rationale behind his vehemence. I later assumed that he tried to symbolize both the Black Panther and the mythic, religious figures of a group of ancient, gigantic white gorillas as some paranoid contemporary allegory.

So, you never can quite figure how some folks will interpret a story. I certainly don't think a writer has to cater to any one group or idea, but creative people do have a responsibility to consider what they are giving their audience, what they are likely to place into their lives, what they will add or detract, and to at least consider what they are doing and why they are doing it before they foist it off on the public.

I can't help but wonder what a work like *The Shining*, in book or film form, gives to an audience, and what its creators think they are giving to their following.

Stanley Kubrick has not released a film in five years. He must have certainly considered his next project, not only as a profitable release, but as a film he would have to live with. As Kubrick once commented, it is his name on that film, so it

better be the film he wanted to make. Kubrick appears to take that comment seriously. He is notorious for filming and refilming a scene thirty to forty times. Sometimes it makes you wonder what in hell happened the first twenty-nine times around, and sometimes it sounds excessive, but it does show his dedication.

I can't imagine the option of being able to redo a scene even two or three times. When you work in comics, you have one chance, and one chance only, to make a scene work. If you have misgauged a word count, or if the scene is interpreted differently than you anticipated, you are stuck with that version as the final version. Any extra effort required of the production department, or any other phase within the comics industry, is met with downright hostility. They have a production line to continue, and that is of the major import. And most companies do not have enough personnel to handle any special cases, nor do deadlines allow them that luxury.

I can see such an option being misused, as well. Imagine an artist and writer reworking the same scene over and over, with a reluctant letterer having to redo the work when they are finished. The odds are that they would all be at each other's throats by the fifth time, never mind the twenty-ninth.

Kubrick utilizes sound and color design and grading with such attention and effect that he is in a league of his own.

And yet, *The Shining* . . .

Since William Peter Blatty stamped the current trail of malevolent children used, with or without their consent, for murderous purposes, that trail has been trampled on endlessly in races for the cash register. In *The Shining*, the twist in the terrain, is that the father becomes obsessed by an incident in the mountain retreat's history, that of a previous caretaker killing his own family with an ax and then committing suicide. Slowly but surely he himself becomes deranged and attempts to kill his simpering wife and his clairvoyant son. The clairvoyance is called the shining, although in this film it never reveals anyting bright, only bloodshed in various quantities. Its most gruesome vision, for the young boy,is of two girls, ages eight and ten who are butchered and lie amidst the carnage of a blood splattered room.

There are different types of horror.

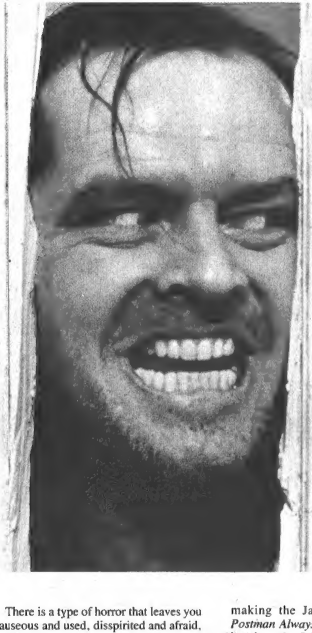
You climb on the roller coaster, and

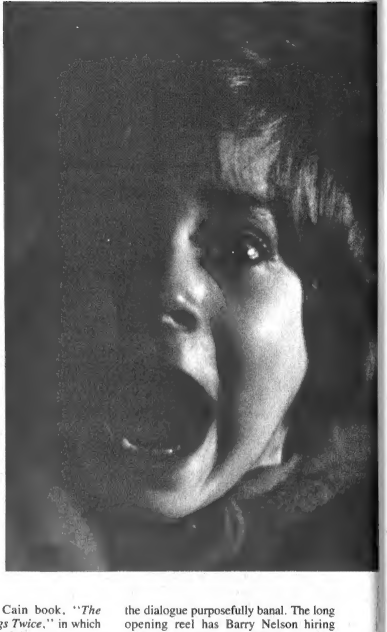
you plummet down the steep contours, and you scream and shriek, and laugh a little bit, tremble a little bit, and when you alight you feel tingly and excited. At its best, that's what a good horror book or film does, but I am not sure that victimizing children and mutilating them falls into that category. Nor am I sure that a family being slaughtered either by mother, father, or off-spring should be merely fodder for exploitation.

The Shining never touches on the pathetic waste of such atrocity, the qualities of inferiority, rage, brutality, the human need for recognition and love, the disintegration of communication, the terrible desire to commit an act that will prove how truly terrible the perpetrator sees him/herself as being. Its premise is simple: Get ready, gang, by the conclusion old dad is going round the bend and will try to hack up mom and the kid and the kid will use his "shining" to try to thwart him. Guaranteed gooseflesh, right?

I am curious about this new horror wave that uses kids, tortures them, disfigures them, kills them, has them drool saliva or throw up green puke, has them as youngsters of five or nine as combatants against their parents. Is there a part of at least some of the audience that is afraid of the responsibility that children represent? Is there some response of internal fear on the part of men and women who are afraid childen will hamper their careers? Or could it be a resentment that the children they have born have restricted their lives, consumed their time? I have watched mothers in Brooklyn screech at their three year olds that they are "stupid!" and have been the burden of their lives, how much better off they would be without them. And how do these children, who will one day be adults, how do they feel? What resentments do they harbor? And what seeds are being sown right now? How many times does a three year old hear he is an idiot before he believes it or rebels against it. And what makes supposedly average, responsible parents tell their kids, casually, as casually as they brush their teeth or watch television, that they will "Kill them!" if they don't behave. This isn't a once in awhile conversation. Stand in a supermarket and listen to the mothers and fathers strolling the aisles and you'll probably hear the same thing. And does this affect the people who are not parents? Who fear the prospect of parentage?

I'm not sure, and I'm not saying such books or films do pander to such subconsious dreads and repressions; and yet, at the same time, I'm not sure, that for some, they don't. Perhaps these are just some questions we all should ask ourselves.





There is a type of horror that leaves you nauseous and used, dissipirited and afraid, and it has nothing to do with roller coasters or haunted houses.

Jack Nicholson plays the father Jack Torrance, who seems a bit bedbugs and loony-toons right from the start, before he even sets foot in the huge mountain resort. Nicholson arches his eyebrows a lot to show he's maniacal and drawls in an imitation of Gabby Hayes gone berserk. No offense to Gabby, who was one of the great supporting players in many a "B" Western during the thirties and forties.

Nicholson obviously loves playing nutsos. He started with nutsos in his early American International days with director Roger Corman, and he won an Oscar for his performance in *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest*, and he is currently remaking the James Cain book, "*The Postman Always Rings Twice*," in which he plays the John Garfield role, but this time the sexual obsession is not subdued but played up as he makes love to a wife near the corpse of her murdered husband. In *The Shining*, Nicholson does not have a script to back him up as he did, say, in *One Flew Over The Cuckoos Nest*.

At times there is the suggestion that both Kubrick and Nicholson are playing *The Shining* as a parody of this genre, as Kubrick allows Nicholson to mug his way through the insanity. And yet, neither stays true to that purpose, as if Stanley knows that, in the final outcome, the bodies of the mutilated little girls must flash on again and again so that the film will be a financial success.

Kubrick and Diane Johnson wrote the screenplay, and Kubrick seems to keep the dialogue purposefully banal. The long opening reel has Barry Nelson hiring Nicholson to take care of their expensive resort, and it appears to be there merely to place this plot point or that: "Our season here runs from, uh, May 15th to October 30th, and then we close down completely."; "The problem is the enormous cost there would be to keep the road to Sidewinder open. It's a . . . It's a twenty-five mile stretch of road. It gets an average of 25 feet of snow during the winter."; "This sight was chosen for its seclusion."; "For some people the solitude and . . . isolation . . . can, of itself, become a problem."; "I don't suppose they told you about the tragedy we had up here in the winter of 1970?" All of this and more as the audience is set up and Nicholson slouches and leers. Nelson never seems to notice.

Kubrick seems bored with all these prerequisites, and yet he spends a great deal of time with them, without presenting more than a surface history for any of the major characters. Nearly twenty minutes pass before Nicholson and his wife, Wendy (Shelly Duvall) and son, Danny (Danny Lloyd) reach the hotel on closing day.

John Alcott beautifully lenses the Colorado mountainsides, with its yellow trees and sweeping vistas, in wide angle tracking shots that zoom along at the level of the curving roadside and then abruptly shoot straight over the edge and open to lush valleys and clean lakes and dense forests suddenly far below. Alcott's photography is grand, especially in the outdoor shots at the mountain lodge and when lensing a natural, complex maze made out of thick, well-trimmed bushes where much of the final chase between crazed, ax-wielding father and panicked son takes place. When the snows fall and shut off the lodge from the outside world, Alcott's images glisten with menace. Lanterns glow, but not with warmth. Snow glares off dark branches. The maze has not only a cold, snow-swept, desolate look, but one that is almost surreal, as well.

The interiors of the hotel are sumptuous. High ceilings. Patterened rugs with carefully condidered colors. A lavatory with cerise urinals for a crazed dialogue between Nicholson and the former caretaker, who advises Nicholson to "discipline" his wife and child as he did his. Alcott's camera tracks along with the son while he rides a low slung, big wheeled scooter, and the screen is filled with rushing images of rich carpentry and polished wood floors, the sound track filling the theater with the sound of wheels on wood, then muffled on the elegant rugs, off and on, from rug to floor, the sound thundering with plastic wheels racing over wood, back on carpet, silent, waiting for the next onslaught of sound.

Sound is a major import in Kubrick's films, and, in his own manner, he utilizes it as effectively as Francis Ford Coppola.

Nicholson sits at his typewriter in a huge, empty ballroom, pretending to be a writer. An elegant chandelier hangs overhead, as if presiding over a echoing mausoleum. Nicholson arches his eyebrows and suffers for his craft.

Shelly Duvall has little to do as the devoted wife, who brings her husband breakfast in bed, quietly listens to him as he curses her out for inquiring about his writing, never mentions that he hasn't shaved in weeks and always has a maniacal gleam in his eyes. Each time she was on the screen I couldn't help but notice how much she looked like Olive Oyl and that she should be perfect in Robert Altman's *Popeye*. I kept hoping that Gene Hackman would offer her some release during the movie and would stroll in, doing his version of Popeye, and tell her, "I yam what I yam an' tha's all I yam." or "I aint got absolukely no edjacation, but I got sense like nobody's bizness."

As the father goes deeper and deeper into the psychological abyss, the audience is continually titillated with the possible abuse toward the son. When Danny is found battered, the mother immediately suspects the father, but later she is certain that a crazy woman is hiding out in the hotel room where the earlier slaughter took place. The father, who by this time has spent weeks cursing and abusing her, decides to enter the room and see if the woman really exists. When he enters the bathroom he sees a beautiful woman sitting in the bathtub. She stands, naked, statuesque. She climbs out of the tub, walks purposefully across the tiles, embraces the clothed husband. His hands run over her flesh. And then, suddenly, we see her from another angle, and she is an incredibly old women with leprous flesh! Hideous gaping holes mar her flesh. The firm breasts of warmth become shapeless and hang over rotting cancerous sores.

It is never clear as to whether or not the woman really was in the room, if Nicholson, as the father, imagined her, or if she was some reincarnation. Kubrick doesn't care, except for the effect, and personally I don't care to seek out the enigma, either, but this sexual encounter does seem to reflect on some attitudes towards lust that have appeared in other Stephen King books.

I have not read *The Shining*, but I have read a few of King's other books, and even if this idea of sex as an unhealthy sport does not run true to the original book, it is in keeping with the erotic sequences that King has written. In *The Stand*, for instance, King focuses on two groups of people who have survived a world-wide plague. One group is simply good. The other is simply bad. The bad folks hang out in Las Vegas (which tells you something). There are two characters who could go either way, good or bad: one a young guy with a bad case of acne who always fails to get laid, the other, a woman that the lead bad dude, a personification of the devil, wants as his virgin bride. In order to insure that the acne kid comes over to his side, the devil-man telepathically orders her to seduce him. The catch is that they can have any kind of sex but traditional, see. So, the woman dresses up in sexy clothes, entices Mr. Acne with this proposition of oral sex and masturbation and leads him down the road to the devil.

I was surprised that hair didn't start to grow on the palms of their hands before they paid for their wicked, wicked ways. They both die in particularly unpleasant fashion. Which only goes to show that selecting your wardrobe at Fredericks of Hollywood will ensure you an After-life of eternal damnation, I guess, and garters and nylons could also damn your soul!

If so, I'm in a whole LOTTA trouble!

In the film version of *The Shining*, the one other sexual moment has the wife seeing a costumed pig going down on a man otherwise neatly attired in a tuxedo. it is never clear what this is supposed to represent, since Kubrick doesn't seem much concerned with the house as a malevolent intelligence feeding off its inhabitants. If, in Kubrick's view, this is mostly the father's obsession, brought about by isolation, paranoia and schizophrenia, then why does the mother see this bizarre act? Never mind. The important thing here is that we have a view of sex as sinful, certainly not as pleasure, an approach that seems straight out of the pages of true confessional magazines.

About a decade back, I remember browsing through a magazine rack and running across one of the passionate romance periodicals. This one had bold white letters against a dark background that caught the eye. It read: "I Paid For the Deadliest Sex Crime Of All!!!" I admit. I was hooked. They had me. What could possibly be the deadliest sex crime of all? I leafed through the pages to learn this startling revelation.

Years later I wrote about this disclosure in the prose SF book that Fictioner Books is going to publish, "*The Variable Syndrome*." The deadliest sex crime turned out to be fellatio, and the girl involved came down with throat cancer as punishment. This nightmarish nonsense is supposed to be commercial. I had a (for want of better words) discussion with a woman editor of this type of magazine years later. She said that the company figured their readership consisted mostly of eleven to fourteen year old girls and frustrated housewives. When I mentioned to her the horror aspects of some of these stories, with their harsh punishments and severe edicts she claimed, defensively, and a bit angrily, that these were fantasy stories that they printed, and that their readers knew they were fantasies, and what was I concerned about. "Be professional," she said, echoing some comic book editors I have heard, "Professionals get an assignment, they do it, and they get it in on time, and they get paid for it, and that's what the business is about!"

I hope not. And I hope I'm not overreacting when I say that it is unnecessary to scare and terrify people about their sexuality, that the publishers, editors and writers could be honest and sincere and sell as many books if it were done properly. I think much of what we are offered at times is dark corruptions of the spirit, and not flights of fancy. I think stories of this type kill the word fantasy as dead as they do the idea of romance. it seems to me that human beings can be hurt and confused enough without feeding them lies that feed on their fears.

The implications in some of these horror novels seems to be doom and moral decay if the lovers are at all experimental. Is this a lingering legacy from the Puritan age gussied up to entice the reader with permissiveness and eroticism and then a slap as reprimand because they were so enticed? Who knows? Perhaps only the bookkeepers reading the sales receipts.

A few folks might have been outraged at my comment in the beginning of this piece that Stanley Kubrick went slumming when he chose to direct Stephen King's *The Shining*. I don't mean that as an idictment. The difference in the work of Kubrick, I think, is the sense of purpose, the desire to interpret our society and its delusions and conceits. Kubrick has made definite, individual films: *Paths of Glory*, *Lolita*, *Dr. Strangelove*; *2001, A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, among others. They are one man's celluloid visions, one man's interpretation, whether likeable or not.

King has found a formula that works very well for him, and he has mined it

like a relentless prospector. But the sense of trying for something more than shock, to go beyond the traditions of the genre, to reveal concerns other than occult abnormalities or ancient vampires or rampant telekinesis is seldom apparant; and it is in this aspect that it is sad that Kubrick decided to make this his first film in five years.

Technically, *The Shining* has many of the superior qualities of earlier Kubirck films, but to what purpose, what effect? The film has moments of shock and moments of power, like getting hit in the head with a hammer. It even has moments of ambiguity, but the enigmas, in this case, do not seem worth the unraveling; the questions appear inconsequential. For the audience it is an exercise in masochism: How much can you endure?

John Warner, another writer, introduced me to Stephen King's work. He recommended "Salem's Lot." I did not even know what a "Salem's Lot" was. I assumed it dealt with occult matters perhaps witchcraft, since John is interested in the subject. It was not a bad book, but it was not about nefarious occult doings, rather it dealt with vampires. I might have been more impressed by the book if I wasn't involved in the comic book industry where vampires have been a stock in trade for decades, despite, or to spite, the comics code. It seemed to me at the time that the horror comics had vampire tales as clever and as moody as this bestseller. They just did not have the public recognition and acceptance.

King understands structure, and he normally builds to an apocalyptic end with a sure hand (although the conclusion of *The Stand*, when reached, is ludicrous in its religious annihilation implications, and obliterates the ultimate confrontation between good and evil so laboriously promised for eight hundred pages). As stated, I have not read *The Shining*, but those who have tell me that it is properly eerie, and that the house is destroyed at tale's end, somewhat in the fashion of Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher."

For Kubrick, outside of its looks, he couldn't give a damn about the house.

The Shining shows Kubrick's talent, but does not reveal his guts or vision.

And as for me, as I walked out of the Loew's Orpheum theater in Manhattan at 86th Street, where the entrance tariff is five bucks and the first ten minutes of the film were out of focus, I just wanted to enjoy the warmth of my wife, Marsha, and get home and check my son, Rob Roy, and then pick up my daugher, Lauren, and look in the listings to see if they were playing a Frank Capra retrospective anywhere that week.

They might not have been shocked by Capra, but they sure as hell would have been entertained and moved.

Warner Bros A Warner Communications Company presents

"THE SHINING"

A STANLEY KUBRICK Film

Starring

Jack Torrance	JACK NICHOLSON
Wendy Torrance	SHELLEY DUVALL

Featuring

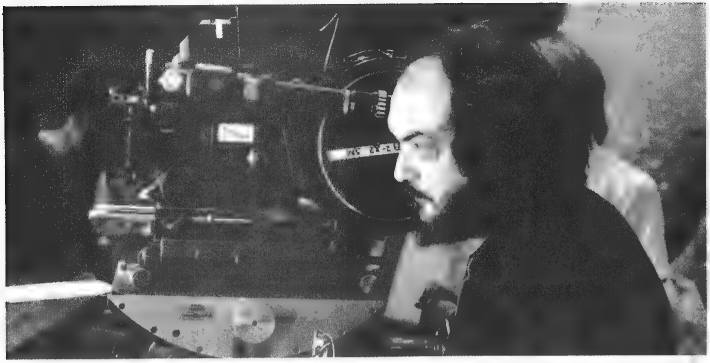
Danny	DANNY LLOYD
Hallorann	SCATMAN CROTHERS
Ullman	BARRY NELSON
Grady	PHILIP STONE
Lloyd	JOE TURKEL
Doctor	ANNE JACKSON
Durkin	TONY BURTON

With

Young woman in bath	LIA BELDAM
Old woman in bath	BILLIE GIBSON
Watson	BARRY DENNEN
Forest Ranger 1	DAVID BAXT
Forest Ranger 2	MANNING REDWOOD
Grady Girl	LISA BURNS
Grady Girl	LOUISE BURNS
Nurse	ROBIN PAPPAS
Secretary	ALISON COLERIDGE
Policeman	BURNELL TUCKER
Stewardess	JANA SHELDON
Receptionist	KATE PHELPS
Injured Guest	NORMAN GAY

THE CREDITS

Produced and Directed by	STANLEY KUBRICK
Screenplay by	STANLEY KUBRICK & DIANE JOHNSON
Produced in association with	THE PRODUCER CIRCLE COMPANY
	ROBERT FRYER
	MARTIN RICHARDS
	MARY LEA JOHNSON
Based upon the novel by	STEPHEN KING
Executive Producer	JAN HARLAN
Photographed by	JOHN ALCOTT
Production Designer	ROY WALKER
Film Editor	RAY LOVEJOY
Music	BELA BARTOK
Music for strings, percussion and celesta Conducted by	HERBERT VON KARAJAN
Recorded by	Deutsche Grammophon
	WENDY CARLOS and RACHEL ELKIND
	GYORGY LIGETI
	KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI
Production Manager	DOUGLAS TWIDDY
Assistant Director	BRIAN COOK
Costumes by	MILENA CANONERO
Steadicam Operator	GARRETT BROWN
Helicopter Photography by	MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS
Assistant to the Producer	ANDROS EPAMINONDAS
Art Director	LES TOMKINS
Make-Up Artist	TOM SMITH
Personal Assistant to the Director	LEON VITALI
Hairstyles	LEONARD
Camera Operators	KELVIN PIKE
	JAMES DEVIS



2nd Unit Photography	DOUGLAS MILSOME MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN FILMS
Focus Assistants	DOUGLAS MILSOME MAURICE ARNOLD
Camera Assistants	PETER ROBINSON MARTIN KENZIE DANNY SHELMERDINE
Grip	DENNIS LEWIS
Gaffers	LOU BOGUE LARRY SMITH
Sound Editors	WYN RYDER DINO DI CAMPO
Sound Recordists	JACK KNIGHT IVAN SHARROCK RICHARD DANIEL
Dubbing Mixer	BILL ROWE
Assistant Editors	GILL SMITH GORDON STAINFORTH
20's Music Advisers	BRIAN RUST JOHN WADLEY
Assistant Directors	TERRY NEEDHAM MICHAEL STEVENSON
Make-Up Artist	BARBARA DALY
Continuity	JUNE RANDALL
Production Accountant	JO GREGORY
Construction Manager	LEN FUREY
Set Dresser	TESSA DAVIES
Property Master	PETER HANCOCK
Decor Artist	ROBERT WALKER

2nd Assistant Editors	ADAM UNGER STEVE PICKARD
Hotel Consultant	TAD MICHEL
Casting	JAMES LIGGAT
Location Research	JAN SCHLUBACH KATHARINA KUBRICK
Production Secretaries	MURRAY CLOSE PAT PENNELEGION MARLENE BUTLAND
Producer's Secretary	MARGARET ADAMS
Production Assistant	EMILIO D'ALESSANDRO
Colour Grading	EDDIE GORDON
Engineering by	NORANK OF ELSTREE
Wardrobe Supervisors	KEN LAWTON RON BECK
Draughtsmen	JOHN FENNER MICHAEL LAMONT MICHAEL BOONE
Property Buyers	EDWARD RODRIGO KAREN BROOKES DAN GRIMMEL
Video Operator	KEN WESTON
Boom Operators	MICHAEL CHARMAN BARRY WILSON
Drapes	TOM TARRY
Master Plasterer	JIM KELLY
Head Rigger	FRED GUNNING
Head Carpenter	DEL SMITH
Head Painter	BARRY ARNOLD
Property Men	PHILIP McDONALD PETER SPENCER

With Special Acknowledgement to TIMBERLINE LODGE, Mt HOOD NATIONAL FOREST, OREGON
CONTINENTAL AIRLINES · STATE OF COLORADO MOTION PICTURE COMMISSION · KBTV CHANNEL 9 DENVER
WPLG CHANNEL 10 MIAMI · KHOW RADIO DENVER · HARRODS OF LONDON · AMERICAN MOTOR COMPANY
CARL ZEISS OF WEST GERMANY · NATIONAL VENDORS · MUSIC HIRE GROUP LTD · CHERRY LEISURE (UK) LTD · JVC (UK) LTD
Filmed with ARRIFLEX Cameras

A Peregrine Film · Made by Hawk Films Ltd at EMI Elstree Studios Ltd, England
DISTRIBUTED BY WARNER BROS A WARNER COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

MARVEL NEWS

Copyright 1980 Marvel Comics Group

THE CONAN SAGA CARRIES ON AFTER THOMAS' DEPARTURE FORMER WARREN EDITOR

Louise Jones has been assigned the task to continue the Conan canon after the imminent departure of Roy Thomas takes effect with issue #115. Marc De Matteis takes over as regular writer of *Conan the Barbarian* with issue 117. Issue #116 will feature a story by Len Wein, John Buscema and Continuity originally done for Peter Pan Records. The Conan chronology which Roy worked so hard to maintain will be respected, though there are no non-Howard adaptions being planned for the foreseeable future. The art team of John Buscema and Ernie Chan will remain on the book.

Roy is leaving far ahead of schedule on the other two Conan books, *King* [illegible]d *The Savage Sword* there will be a backlog of Thomas stories to give Louise Jones and Marc De Matteis time to plan Conan's future. Issue 5 of *King Conan* will begin an adaptation of the novel *Conan*. The adaptation will stretch through issue 8, which is Thomas' last issue. Roy will remain at the helm of *The Savage Sword of Conan* until issue 60. There are 6 book-length Thomas-Buscema inventory stories, and many Thomas-edited backup stories as well. Issues 58-60 will finish the adaptation of De Camp, Carter novel *Conan Of the Isles* begun in the Conan annual, which features Conan as a 70 year old man.

DAREDEVIL AND *POWER MAN/IRON FIST* MONTHLY

Due to increased sales *Daredevil* and *Power Man/Iron Fist* have been promoted monthly status. The creative teams of both books will remain intact despite the added pressure of performing on a monthly basis. Directing the fates of "the most unlikely team of all" (Luke Cage and Iron Fist) will be Mary Jo Duffy, Kerry Gammill and Ricardo Villamonte. Roger McKenzie, Frank Miller and Klaus Janson will continue also continue on Daredevil.

To give Frank Miller a chance to adapt from a bi-monthly 17 page book to a monthly 22 pages, a backup feature written by Larry Hama with art by Walt Simonson will soon appear in *Daredevil*. Although no details are available, the feature will not be dissimilar to the mileu of the *Daredevil* strip and will feature an original character which will reflect author Hama's interests.

MOON KNIGHT: MONTHLY

Because of the overwhelming response to Moon Knight's solo appearance in *Marvel Preview* he has now been awarded his own monthly book. Editor Denny O'Neill is rushing to get the premier issue on the stand before the close of the Summer and comic's peak sales period. A tentative release date has been set for August.

Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz will continue to chronicle the exploits of the Dark Night Avenger.

Issue #1 will retell Moon Knights' origin, which will be different from the origin presented in the *Werewolf by Night* series. Other upcoming villians will include the Slasher and Midnight Man.

GULACY AND RUSSELL RETURN IN EPIC 3

Paul Gulacy and P. Craig Russell who have worked almost exclusively in the limited edition markets recently return to Marvel because of the new benefits offered by *Epic Illustrated*. *Epic* 3 sports a Gulacy cover painting, and includes a new Doug Moench-Paul Gulacy story entitled "Livido". Roy Thomas and P Craig Russell begin their two part adaptation of Michael Moorcock's "The Dreaming City" with Elric of Melnibourne in the same issue.

Machine Man and *Battlestar Galactica* Cancelled

In a move to strengthen its line Marvel has cancelled two poorly selling titles: *Machine Man* and *Battlestar Galactica*. *Machine Man* a book which three times changed its direction in its short run because of the loss of two major creative forces; Jack Kirby and Marv Wolfman, ends with issue 19. *Battlestar Galactica* a comic book based on the ill-fated TV series, finishes its four-color run with issue 23.

MARVEL REPRINT LINE HALVED

Marvel's considerable reprint line, which in recent years has expanded to include some of Marvel's lesser popular heroes has been cut back considerably. Among those cancelled is *Fantasy Masterpieces* currently reprinting the adventures of the Stan Lee, John Buscema *Silver Surfer* and Jim Starlin's *Adam Warlock*, with issue 14. Other discontinued books include *Amazing Adventures* (with #14). *Marvel's Greatest Comics* (with issue 96) and *Tales to Astonish* (with issue 14).

GOODWIN EASES AWAY FROM *STAR WARS*

After the six part *Empire Strikes Back* adaptation, Archie Goodwin is relinquishing the editorial reins of the Star Wars book to Louise Jones. Goodwin will continue to sporadically write stories for the book, including the double-sized 50th issue which will feature artwork by Al Williamson and Carlos Garzon.

Goodwin incidently will soon be leaving the *Star Hawks* newspaper strip. No replacement has been named, but Roger McKenzie who currently scripts the Sunday Tarzan strip is writing a fill-in story to appear after Goodwin leaves.

White Tiger BACKUP

A three-part White Tiger backup is slated to appear in *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man* to give regular penciller Marie Severin (and head colorist) a chance to get ahead on the book. The strip will be written by Roger Stern with art by Denis Kohen and Joe Rubenstein, and will guest star Blackbyrd. There will be three 6 page chapters and then the story will conclude in a book-length story featuring Spider-Man.

NEW *What If* Format

Faced with the prospect of running out of concepts that merit a full book, editor Mark Gruenwald is altering *What If's* format to allow for more experimentation. Traditionally, the only issues that have sold featured the major Marvel characters, so an attempt is being made to diversify the book while still keeping its major selling points. Beginning in issue 23, there will be three stories in each oversized issue: a 20 page lead feature (and cover subject) of a major character (Hulk, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four etc., a 12 page backup story with a lesser known character and a regular "Tales of the Watcher" backup by Mark Gruenwald and Ron Wilson.

Upcoming in issue 24 is the long-awaited story which took two years to finish: "What If ... Gwen Stacy Hadn't Died?" by Tony Isabella, Gil Kane and Frank Giacoia.

THE MARVEL MAGAZINES

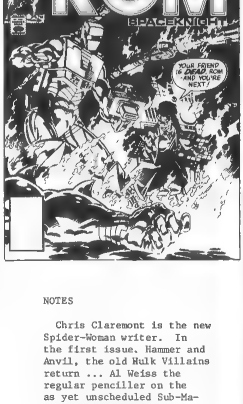
With sales on the Marvel Magazine line dropping, a number of changes are planned by editors Lynn Graeme and Ralph Macchio. Because the reprint "Bizarre Adventures" issue of *Marvel Preview* sold well, two issues of all-original material will appear. Planned is a mixture of traditional Marvel characters and a number of new features. *Preview 23* will showcase Shandra, a new female barbarian strip set in a futuristic ice-world setting, written by Lynn Graehme, pencils by John Buscema and finished by newcomer Joe Jusco.

Slated to appear in *Preview 24* is a new Black Widow story by Ralph Macchio and George Perez, a 20 page Daughters of the Dragon tale by Denny O'Neill and Marshall Rogers, and Lady Daemon, a new feature with story and art by Mike Golden.

Other changes include a new backup feature in *The Rampaging Hulk*, Dominick Fortune by Denny O'Neill and Howie Chaykin. The strip will run for six issues after which a decision will be made whether to continue the strip or begin a different series.

To bolster sales on the *Howard the Duck* book, the 8th issues features, "Duckman: Dark Mallard of the Night", a Batman parody with art (pencils, inks and tones) by Marshall Rogers. Other Rogers stories are being discussed.

In the planning stages is a *Marvel Super Special* tentatively titled, The Marvel Universe. This book is being designed as a full-color magazine showcase of the major Marvel characters. Associate Editor Ralph Macchio says that *"The book will be an oppurtunity for some of the talented people in the business who have not had either the time or the chance before, to work with the major Marvel characters."*



NOTES

Chris Claremont is the new Spider-Woman writer. In the first issue, Hammer and Anvil, the old Hulk Villains return ... Al Weiss the regular penciller on the as yet unscheduled Sub-Mariner book has completed one story. He has also

finished a Captain America story which will be used as a fill-in ... Mark Gruenwald, Ron Wilson and Gene Day remain the permanent team on *Marvel Two-in-One*. Issue 70 will be a solo Thing story in which a significant change will occur in the Thing's life. Future team-ups include a 2 part Inhumans story, the Hellcat and the Puppet Master Christmas story ... Chris Claremont and Frank Miller are the creative team for the double-sized 100th issue of *Marvel Team-Up*, which teams Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four ... Marty Pasko is now the regular writer on *Star Trek* joining Dave Cockrum and Klaus Janson with issue 8... Peter Gillis and Doug Moench have both done *Thor* fill-ins ... The Spider-Man Annual written by Denny O'Neill and pencilled by Frank Miller guest stars Dr. Strange ... Upcoming villians in *Captain America* are Batroc, Mr. Hyde, a guest appearance by the Invaders and in issue 256 (the 40th anniversary of Cap's first case): The Red Skull....

In the April issue of *The Comic Reader* (#179) the editors pulled an April Fool's prank, doing a front page memorium in tribute to the *late* Stan Lee!

Stan, not one to lose his cool, sent the *Comic Reader*'s editors a note which we have paraphrased below.

Dear Editors,

In the future, I wish you would not print my obituary before its time. The people at Marvel have a policy against hiring dead people, and due to your article, I have been fired.

Stan

DC NEWS

Joe Kubert's preliminary sketch for the new *Mystery in Space* series premiering in issue #113.

TM and © DC COMICS INC. 1980

DC STILL UNCLEAR ABOUT THOMAS TAKEOVER

Still no word on what books Roy Thomas will write or edit when his contract expires with Marvel, August 31st. Any speculation about possible assignments would be premature, according to DC spokesman Jack Harris, but rumors persist that Thomas has already been slated to inaugerate DC's 2nd revival of Thomas' beloved *All-Star Comics*. It is certain however that Thomas will be writing original stories and not comic book adaptations of stories from other mediums, as he had been doing with the Conan mythos, since DC currently is not publishing any material except straight super-hero or mystery books.

WOLFMAN AND PEREZ REVIVE *TEEN TITANS*

The other recent Marvel emigrants, Marv Wolfman and George Perez, combine to revive the once popular *Teen Titans* strip in a new direction. Following in the footsteps of Marvel's enormously successful *X-Men* revival, Wolfman and Perez have revamped the team and added three new members. One of the new members is Beast Boy, who joins the team as the Changeling, a youth who can assume the shape of an animal.

The book has been retitled *The New Teen Titans* and the first issue will be on sale August 14th. Other Perez work includes a stint as the penciller for the annual JLA/JSA teamup which includes a guest appearance by Darkseid and the New Gods.

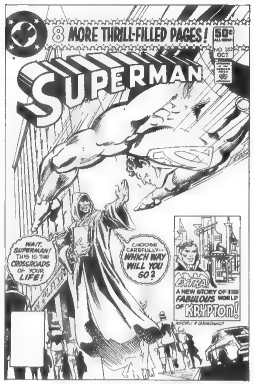
WEIN AND STARLIN TEAM-UP SUPERMAN AND MARTIAN MANHUNTER

Jim Starlin and Len Wein have finished a three-part Superman, Martian Manhunter story for *DC COMICS PRESENTS*, which will appear in issues 27-29.

SUPERMAN MOVIE

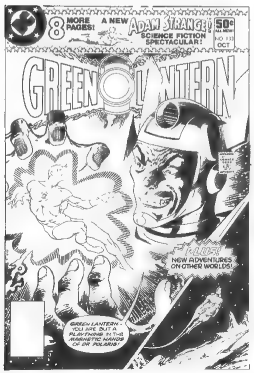
The second Superman movie will be released in Germany and Australia in December 1980, Gene Hackman (as Luthor) is prominent in the film as are the Phantom Zone villians. Although there has been no additional shooting with Marlon Brando, the producers may include some unused footage originally shot for the first Superman movie.

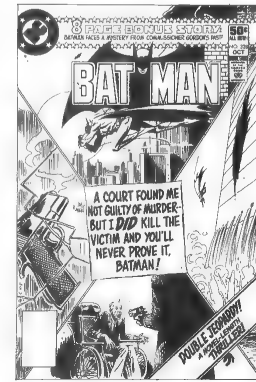
DC Comics plans a national press conference in early July, where more details will be announced.


8 MORE THRILL-FILLED PAGES!
50¢
SUPERMAN
WAIT, SUPERMAN! THIS IS THE CROSSROADS OF YOUR LIFE!
CHOOSING CAREFULLY... WHICH WAY WILL YOU GO?
Enter! A NEW STORY OF THE FABULOUS WORLD OF KRYPTON!

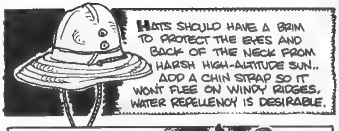
JOE KUBERT RETURNS

Joe Kubert's first complete interior art in many years will appear in the revived *Mystery in Space* title as he assumes the pencilling chores on the Space Ranger strip. The story, "Gremlins", written by Len Wein will appear in issue #113, on sale August 28.


8 MORE PAGES!
A NEW ADAM STRANGE!
50¢
SCIENCE FICTION SPECTACULAR!
GREEN LANTERN
NEW ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS!
GREEN LANTERN: YOU ARE OUT A PLOTTING VICTIM OF THE SINISTER SINESTRO!


8 PAGE BONUS STORY!
50¢
BATMAN FACES A MYSTERY FROM COMIC SCHER GORDON'S PAST!
BATMAN
A COURT FOUND ME NOT GUILTY OF MURDER... BUT I DID KILL THE VICTIM AND YOU'LL NEVER PROVE IT, BATMAN!
DOUBLE FEATURE THRILLER!

INDEPENDENT PRESS


HATS SHOULD HAVE A BRIM TO PROTECT THE EARS AND BACK OF THE NECK FROM HARSH HIGH-ALTITUDE SUN.. ADD A CHIN STRAP SO IT WON'T FLEE ON WINDY RIDGES. WATER REPELLENCY IS DESIRABLE.

BEFORE BUYING A PACK, LOAD IT UP WITH ABOUT THIRTY POUNDS AND TRY IT ON... BOOTS, PACKS, SLEEPING BAGS AND TENTS ARE THE MOST EXPENSIVE BACKPACKING ITEMS SO IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO DO A BIT OF COMPARATIVE SHOPPING...

HEAVY METAL

An interview with Moebius is slated to appear in the August *Heavy Metal*, continuing new editor Ted White's policy of adding more text to this $2.00, read-it-in-15-minute magazine. Future subjects include Phillipe Druillet.

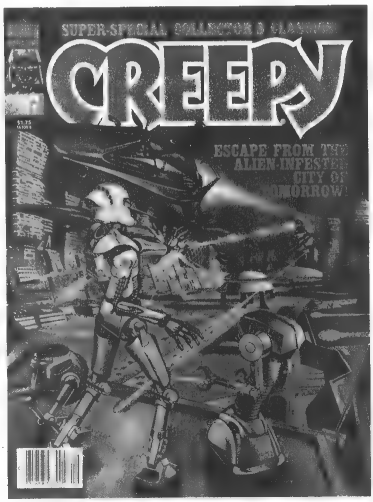
Also beginning in August is a new Phillipe Druillet strip entitled "Salammbo". Replacing the Moebius "Shore Line" strip (which ends in August) is a new Paul Kirchner color opus "Shaman". Reportedly the strip has an existentialist Don Juan flavor.

WARREN

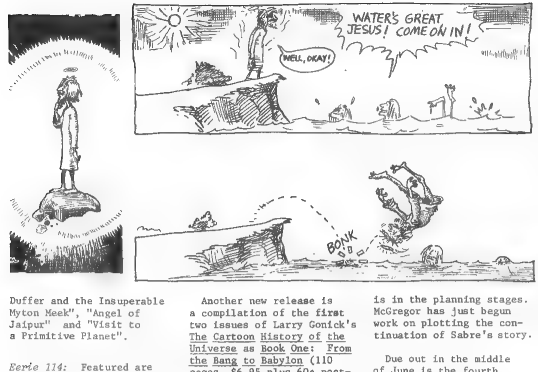
Warren Publications is accepting no new material. All stories appearing in Warren magazines are inventory stories. No new stories are being commissioned.

Vampirella 90: Includes "The Insane Alchemist" a Vampirella story written by Richard Margopoulos, with art by Pablo Marcos and Rudy Nebres, and a Pantha story by Richard Margopoulos and Leo Duranona with Alex Toth inking, entitled "Eye of Annubis". Also featured are "Double Woman" by Don Glut and Alfredo Alcala, "Deadringer" Gerry Boudreau and Auraleon, "Revenge Inc." by Boudreau and Anton Caravana. On sale 7/8.

Creepy 121: An All-John Severin issue, from the vault of ages. Included are such Severin stories as "A Toast For No Man's Memory" (written by Len Wein), "The Strange Incurable Hauntings of Pheneas Boggs" (story by Bill Dubay), "The Star Saga of Serious Sam" (story by Nicola Cuti), "Warrior's Ritual" (story by Archie Goodwin) and four stories written by Bill Dubay: "Battlerot", "Professor



THE EARLIEST APES HAD FAIRLY SHORT ARMS AND LONG LEGS, LIKE OTHER ANIMALS.
ARMY PHOTOGRAPHER WITH MANY INCHES OF MUSCLE CHARACTERISTICS
BUT APES DISCOVERED A NEW WAY TO GET AROUND THE TREETOPS: "BRACHIATION"—OR SWINGING.
OOOP!
THIS NATURALLY LED TO LONGER ARMS, SHORTER THUMBS, AND SHORTER LEGS.
YOU ARE SUCH A SWINGER, YOU BIG APE!
AND MY KIDS WILL, TOO!



Duffer and the Insuperable Myton Meek", "Angel of Jaipur" and "Visit to a Primitive Planet".

Eerie 114: Featured are "The Executioners" by Will Richardson and Corillo, "Hexter" by Victor De la Fuentes and "War Party" by Jacobs and Sanchez.

RIP-OFF PRESS

Continuing its attempt to reach new markets, the spring release from the Rip-Off Press include three new trade paperback collections.

First is a collection of the Foolbert Sturgeon (Frank Stack) strip Jesus. Included are such Jesus comix stories as "The New Adventures of Jesus", "Jesus Joins the Academic Community." The book (96 pages, $6.95 plus 60c postage and handling) is appropiately titled The New Adventures of Jesus.

Frank Stack now solidly entrenched as a Professor of Art at the University of Missouri has finally taken credit for his work after avoiding possible repercussions by hiding behind the Foolbert Sturgeon pen name. Also included is a foreward by Playboy editor Bill Helmer.

Another new release is a compilation of the first two issues of Larry Gonick's The Cartoon History of the Universe as Book One: From the Bang to Babylon (110 pages, $6.95 plus 60c postage and handling).

Also from the Rip-Off Press this spring is Baron Von Mabel's Backpacking, a complete illustrated beginner's primer to the technique and paraphernalia of modern go-light backpacking. Written and illustrated by Sheridan Anderson, the Baron Von Mabel's Backpacking (98 pages, $4.95 plus postage and handling) explains all the "dos and don'ts" with over four hundred pictures and diagrams.

All of these books are available at your local bookstore or may be ordered directly from the Rip-Off Press, P.O. Box 14158, San Francisco, CA., 94114. Be sure to include 60c for postage and handling for each book ordered.

ECLIPSE ENTERPRISES

Publisher Dean Mullaney reports that Sabre 1 has sold out its second printing. Only 200 copies are left.

Sabre 2, a sequel to Eclipse's first venture is in the planning stages. McGregor has just begun work on plotting the continuation of Sabre's story.

Due out in the middle of June is the fourth Eclipse book, Detectives Inc. The square-bound, trade paperback contains an all-new 46 page story written by Don McGregor and illustrated by Marshall Rogers. Priced at $6.95, the book includes a full-processed color cover painting by Marshall Rogers. The publishers caution that the book is for mature audiences only. There is also a numbered and autographed edition by the authors, limited to 300, priced at $10.00

Coming in August is Stewart The Rat by Steve Gerber, Gene Colan and Tom Palmer. Same format and price as Detectives Inc.

All books may be ordered directly from Eclipse Enterprises, 81 Delaware St. Staten Island, NY 10304. Be sure to include 25c for postage and handling.

OTHERS

New from Comely Comics, this month, is the 10th issue of *Captain Canuck*. Included in this issue are a new Captain Canuck story by Richard Comeley and George Freeman and the second chapter of "Beyond", a new fantasy epic by Richard Comely and Jean-Claude Aubin. Cover by George Freeman.

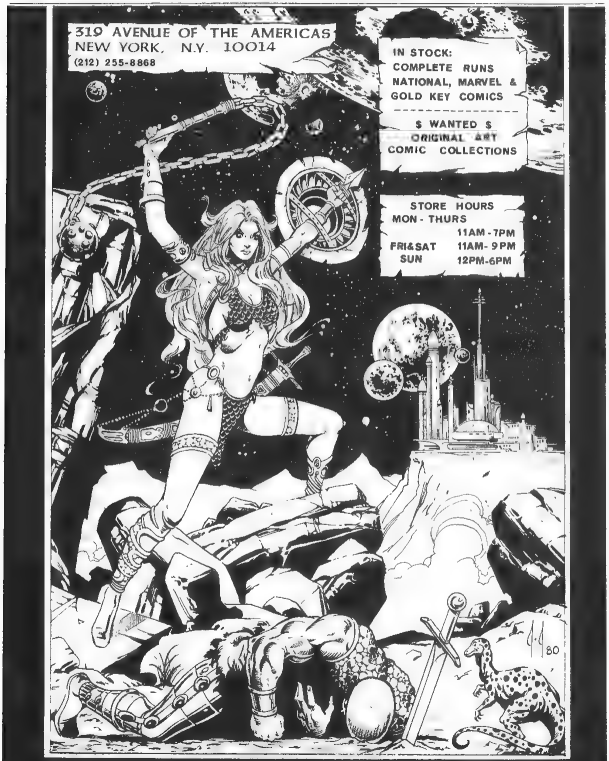
Coming soon is a new magazine by Art Spiegleman, *Raw*. No publishing details yet except that it will not be a traditional underground comic but that a tabloid format is planned.

Fantagraphics Inc. announced their entry into the limited edition publishing field last month. Their first book will be a new comic book adventure of Walter Gibson's *The Shadow*, written by Harlan Ellison and illustrated by Michael W. Kaluta. Planned is an initial print run of 15,000 with a cover price around $6.00. Ellison's story, "Dragonshadows" is approximately 50 pages long and set in the '30's. Gary Groth has commissioned two original full-color painting by Kaluta to serve as front and back covers for the 81/2" x 11" square-bound volume. "Dragonshadows" is scheduled for release in the fall.

Available for the first time in this country is the first half of Keiji Nakazawa's *Gen of Hiroshima*. The massive graphic novel tells the story of one survivor of the atomic attack of Hiroshima. The story is reprinted in two volumes (Volume 1 is 284 pages and Volume 2 runs 341 pages) and may be ordered from The War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.

GOT THE CREEPY FEELIN' YOU'RE MISSING ALL THE FUN AND THE LATEST NEWS?
SUBSCRIBE TO THE COMIC TIMES!
DON'T MISS AN ISSUE
SUBSCRIBE NOW
MAIL THE COUPON AND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER (NO CASH) TO:
THE COMIC TIMES
305 BROADWAY, SUITE 1415
N.Y. NY, 10007
(212) 285-1640
SAVE OVER 1/3 COVER PRICE
PLEASE SEND ME 12 ISSUES OF
THE COMIC TIMES
FOR ONLY
(PLEASE CHECK ONE)
☐ $15.00 STANDARD RATE (SECOND CLASS MAIL)
☐ $20.00 THE TRUE FAN! (FIRST CLASS MAIL)
NAME
ADDRESS
CITY
STATE
ZIP

village comic art shop



SHOPS & DEALERS WE ARE THE LARGEST DIRECT WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTION IN THE EASTERN U.S. INQUIRIES INVITED

A Review

by
Andrew Helfer

Stop me if you've heard this one, "The Empire Strikes Back" is the greatest Science Fiction movie ever made.

Sound familiar? It probably does by now, since practically everyone and his grandmother has read or heard the praises of George Lucas-films' latest Star Wars Epic. After contact with the media blizzards that accompany these films, it's difficult to feel anything-less than wild enthusiasm for Part Five of what producer Lucas calls "The Journal Of The Whills," a proposed quartet of trilogies dealing with the death and rebirth of a civilization that existed long ago and far, far away.

Let's face it. Star Wars is one of the few remaining American commodities that actually sells itself. It transcends all boundaries. Older folks can relive the melodramatic corn that made up their Saturday afternoon at the movies Serial diet, Kids can become spellbound by the filmic equivalent of the funny animals -- R2D2, and C3PO. Science Fiction and Comic Fans can revel in its unashamed exploitation of familiar plots and effects.

"The Empire Strikes Back" offers additional characters to satisfy two groups that may have been overlooked the first time around. Yoda, that three foot Jedi Master, sinks his hooks into the pop philosophical, Carlos Castenada crowd, spewing out a seemingly endless supply of "power positive thinking" rhetoric. And Llandro Calissian, the newly legitimized governor of the cloud city of Bespin, manages to gain the film a foothold among black audiences, with a character that men find masculine, and women swoon over.

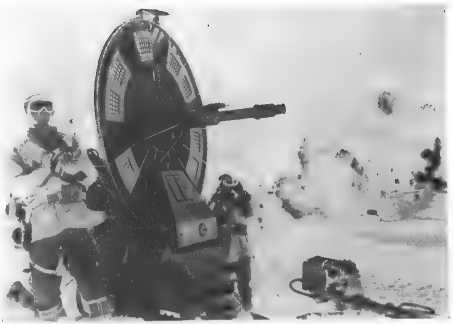
With characters and special effects like these, how can a public, and therefore, the media, refuse to become totally enamoured with the prospect of the new Star Wars film? The answer is, they can't. So the advertising blitz for the "Empire Strikes Back" begins. Only this time, Lucas doesn't have to pay for commercial time. Far from it. Magazines seem to beg for an advance preview of the film. T.V. stations send camera crews to Manhattan on opening day to film crowds standing on line. WCBS-TV in New York devoted the first ten minutes of their six o'clock report to discuss the Star Wars phenomenon. (In the business, that's known as hard news.) Time magazine presented a thoroughly horrendous portrait of Darth Vader on their cover, with a six-page article, complete with color pictures splashed through the insides. Marvel released a comic magazine and pocket book edition of the film a month before release date, spoiling it for all comic fans, Kenner unleashed their "Empire Strikes Back" collection of little toy dolls and bigger, more expensive paraphenalia, to insure the prospect that the philosophical Yoda's three inch image will replace the Savior on automobile dashboards all across the country. Exploitation magazines like "Star Fire" and tens

Copyrighted 1980 Andy Helfer

of others are speeded off the presses in the hopes of cashing in on the insatiable craze. Even the film program is not a program at all, but rather, a magazine featuring words and pictures about the film. The tradition of those fine, heavy stock glossy paged program books with splashes of vibrant colors, has given way to a three dollar magazine, hawked at theaters side-by-side with the Marvel comics adaption.

One could go on, and on. But you get the point. "The Empire Strikes Back" probably has the lowest advertising budget of any major film, because *everyone* wants to sell it for them.

And it's working. The "Empire Strikes Back" promotional campaign was amazingly low-keyed. I saw the first commercial for the film only two days before the premiere. Actual ad space seemed surprisingly light for a sequel to a film that has grossed over 500 million dollars. And from both the crowds lining up for every performance, and the tremendous revenue to be made from licensing the films characters, "The Empire Strikes Back" is well on its way to equalling its predecessors share of the film industries profits.



But it wouldn't be the first time a magazine was forced to renege on its blessing after a disasterous screening. Cinefantastique, for example, ran a full double issue on the making of Disney's "The Black Hole", but was forced to give it the old thumbs down in the reveiw section. However, mass public mentality, it is assumed, can't cope with this kind of internal contradiction. So you go with the flow. Hype leads to more hype, until the beauty of special effects cannot be distanguished from a plot that seems tired and too open ended to be enjoyed. This last statement, incidently, goes for both "The Black Hole" and "The Empire Strikes Back".

"As you might have guessed by now, it's time to be objective, really objective, to look at "The Empire Strikes Back" as an entity unto itself, as all films should be examined... and that's where the problems begin.

"The Empire Strikes Back" (TESB from now on) is supposed to be part two of a three part trilogy, but from my seat it looked more like part of a 15 chapter serial. Contrary to what Mr. Lucas maintains, it seems hard to believe that the whole

All Photos Copyright Lucasfilm Ltd. 1980

Whills'saga was conceived at Star Wars' birth, because the initial film leaves little left to the imagination. Most current features leave at least one open end, so sequels can be considered once box office receipts are in. In Star Wars, Darth Vader's spin-off into space provided the possibilities. But there was little else left. Luke, it was assumed, grasped the force, blew up the Death Star, was congratulated by the Princess, and walked off into the sunset to engage in some unmentioned menage a trois with Han Solo. Given the films "Once upon a time" opening line, a "happily ever after" conclusion doesn't seem at all preposterous.

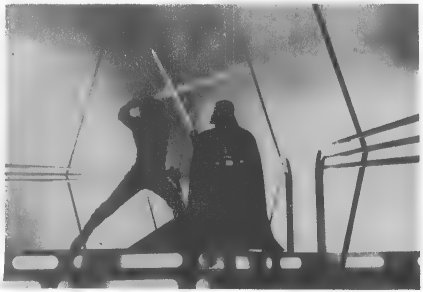
But now, we see that "Star Wars" is part four, and TESB is part five. The Death Star is merely one of many destructive devices controlled by the Empire. The Rebels are still badly understaffed. Darth Vader is still kicking. Han Solo is still trying to leave the Princess' influence. Luke is still a novice in the ways of the force. And the Death Star battle was only a minor skirmish. How terribly convenient.

Convenient, I think, is precisely the word. In the finest Monday morning quarterback tradition, Lucas lets us know of the real developments only *after* Star Wars made its millions. In TESB, everything before seems inconsequential. The stereotypical characterizations 'developed' in Star Wars now seem far more complex, but no less stereotypical. Princess Leia, we discover, loves the incorrigible, but good-hearted Han. Luke is impulsive, and possibly unfit to be a Jedi Knight. Obi-Wan lives on, in true to life stereoscopic hologram form. Darth Vader's command of the dark side of the Force now enables him to kill via mental will alone.

The revelations keep coming, but despite it all, nothing really happens. Just as Star Wars seems irrelevent in retrospect, TESB seems unimportant in light of the third and final part.

What TESB really is, is a light show for the eighties. Each set is a feast for the eyes, but provides little food for thought. We move from the stark white snow world of Hoth to outer space, to Yoda's swamp planet, to Darth Vader's Battle Cruiser, to the Cloud City. Each set receives its share of special effects, but the most impressive is the Millenium Falcon's trip through an asteroid field in order to evade the Empire pursuit.

The only scenes with special effects that fail are those that occur on the Snow World at the films outset. Here, director Irwin Kershner resorts to stop motion animation to show both the Empire "Walkers", a sort of high-rise tank that looks like a mechanical giraffe, and the two-



legged Tautaun, a strange creature that looks like a kangaroo but smells like a camel. While the Tautaun is an ingenious creature, the miniaturization effects used are too herky-jerky, and since the creature is only shown moving from long distances, the stop-motion effects become painfully evident. Despite the attention shown to mechanics, the walkers also fail on this level. You see the gears turn and swivel as the legs move, but you also have to sit back and wonder why they have the legs in the first place. After all, isn't the whole idea of a tank to have an unstoppable machine with a low center of gravity? Viewers could see the "Achilles Heel" a mile off.

Enough of special effects., What should be of real concern is the story, and this is, despite the gung - ho action distractions, sorely lacking. Whereas Star Wars was simply a fond remembrance of the entertaining but inconsequential science fiction space operas of George Lucas' youth, TESB tries to inject meaning where there should be none. This is most evident in the scenes featuring Frank Oz's Yoda, a metaphysical little gnome who sounds too much like Fozzie Bear to be taken too seriously. He espouses such quotable lines as "Try not. Do or do not, There is no try." Pretty heavy stuff huh? I didn't think so, but the audience went wild. Like I said, the little guys a candidate for dashboard savior of the year.

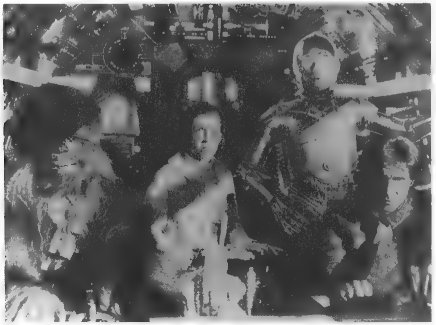
The other "serious" character is Darth Vader, that totally malevolent character who controls the dark side of the force. He traipses about his battle cruiser in a kind of existential distraction, mediatating on the young Skywalker's fate, and wiping out his commanding officers via long distance mind crushing. With the voice of James Earl Jones as recorded through some intricate scuba-gear setup, he is definately the personification of evil, and is ultimately the film's strongest character.

Both characters present the films two revelations (not counting Princess Leia's romantic inclinations for Han Solo), and the fact that these are the *only* two positive plot developments shows how troubled the film's script really is.

Yoda's revelation comes at the conclusion of his sequence, when he mutters to Obi-Wan's holographic image that Luke is *not* the last hope of the galaxy, and that there is, in fact, another. What all this means is anyones guess, as it is supposed to be, but my money's riding on the reintroduction of Han Solo -- or his new counterpart, Llandro Calissian, to take the reigns of the force and become its great white knight. Of course, the whole thing might be some kind of red herring. We won't know till 1983.

The other, more important revelation concerns the Dark Lord of Sith. It seems that Darth Vader was horribly mutilated after a battle with Obi-Wan years ago, and must wear his suit and helmet as a life support device. In a scene that harkens back to Doctor Doom, we actually get a glimpse of Vader's horribly scarred cranium as the helmet is lowered on his head. More important, however, is the fact that Vader is Luke's father, who, according to Obi-Wan, was killed by the Lord of Sith.

All this is as confusing to us as it is to Luke, who must decide between embracing the Force's dark side or jumping into an enormous exhaust duct that looks very much like the hole he had swung across in the first Star Wars. Suffice to say, he doesn't give in, but he doesn't win either.

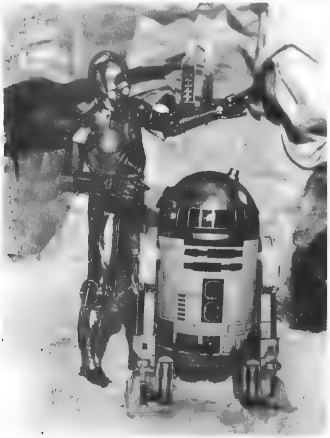


The mood at the film's conclusion is grim, and, I think, too full of holes to be truly satisfying. Lucas is taking a big chance here, hoping he can maintain audience interest for the three years it will take for the next Star Wars film to hit the theaters. Basically, it seems as if he's using the old movie serials cliff-hanger approach. Although Luke isn't tied to the train tracks at the films conclusion, he might as well be. Hopefully, the non-stop action that cruises TESB to its conclusion will be enough to keep audiences happy, but I'm not sure. What Lucas has forgotten is that Star Wars is not an added feature, that folks shell out five bucks to see it, and that the next episode won't be in the theaters next week.

But the seams of the Star Wars mythos is beginning to show on other levels, most importantly with the supporting characters. Although all had been conceived as cliche characters to begin with, TESB brings them into new, and less effective lights.

The greatest disappointment is Chewbacca, that once savage creature whose moods shifted as quickly as the millenium Falcon moved into Hyper Space. Here, he has become a laughable, almost pitiable teddy bear, devoid of the ferocity that made him a personal favorite. Instead of a wild animal, Chewbacca's new, refined personality places him firmly in a circus act. It's unfortunate, but I guess it sells.

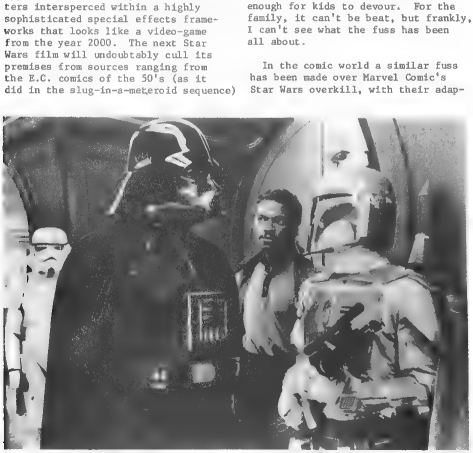
C3PO suffers from a similar demasculating effect. Although far from macho in the first place, in "Star Wars" he maintained a degree of loyalty, and at times was of some service to the Rebels. In TESB he has become a bumbling, incompetent, self-pitying robot, the droid equivelent of "Lost In Space's" Doctor Smith.



The others remain essentially the same, keeping the roles and attitudes set out at the series' beginning. And they will probably remain the same in the third episode (or is it sixth?) when the final confrontation between the Empire and the Rebels is expected.

So, "The Empire Strikes Back" is a continuation without a conclusion, a journey without any movement. Its appeal lies in already stock characters interspersed within a highly sophisticated special effects frameworks that looks like a video-game from the year 2000. The next Star Wars film will undoubtably cull its premises from sources ranging from the E.C. comics of the 50's (as it did in the slug-in-a-meteroid sequence) to the Buck Rogers strips of the 30's with practically everything else in between. TESB is flashy, sophisticated, yet at the same time simple enough for kids to devour. For the family, it can't be beat, but frankly, I can't see what the fuss has been all about.

In the comic world a similar fuss has been made over Marvel Comic's Star Wars overkill, with their adaptation of "The Empire Strikes Back." It has already appeared in two forms, a Marvel Super Special Magazine, and the first of Marvel's proposed line of paperbacks. This month serialization in the Star Wars comic will begin, and an oversize Treasury edition can't be far behind.



Marvel knows that all these projects will be financially successful, but seeing the same stuff in four different versions is too much for even the strongest collector's stomach. I say this because, aesthetically speaking, the Empire Strikes Back adaption is a bust.

The news that Al Williamson was to do the adaption was received with a burst of approval by fandom. But the end result shows how little time was spent on the project. Williamson shares art credits with Carlos Garzon, yet his sytle rarely shows through. Although the layout seems fairly plausible, and Archie Goodwin's adaption of the script is, as usual, superb, the artwork is too sketchy, and, with the exception of some of the swamp world sequences, is at best forgettable.

It is on the swamp world that Williamson's occasional flashes of brilliance come through. Since the E.C. days Williamson has been a master of alien foliage, and here he really shines. Luke's scenes with the light sabre, (which do not appear in the film, and are probably the magazine's only point of divergence)are especially superb.

But in other spots, it seems that this was a real rush job.

Much of the machinery seems almost traced, and the detail one expects of Williamson is never in evidence. The millennium Falcon seems to suffer the most from this, usually looking more like a stray interstellar hockey puck than a majestic but well-worn pirate fighter.

To add insult to injury, the color separations of the book are among the worst I have seen. Most pages have little or no color gradiants, and one can only attribute this to a quick printing job. One can see how ambitious Colorist Glynis Wein was in her approach, but sadly, little if any of her brushwork comes through.

The adaption was intended, it seems, for release in comic form, and the pocket book addition seems an afterthought at best. Like all the other paperback editions that blow up panels to full page size, continuity suffers. Once feels that the whole train of thought lapses with each page turned, and that this is the most blatently bad of the four versions.

Marvel says that all versions will contain *some* artwork that had not previously appeared in other versions, but this is poor compensation for a product that seems as slipshod as this does.

Despite these points, however, the two dollar price tag attached to the magazine version makes it a pretty good buy, but one helluva spoiler if you haven't seen the movie. Why Marvel released the book a month before the film's release, or why Lucasfilms permitted them to do so, is unknown, but at least a couple of fans have suffered.

Curiousity killed the cat, it has been said, but Marvel's sneak preview of "The Empire Strikes Back" is far from a killer.

AND AS TIME PASSES, LUKE DOES THAT AND MORE. MUCH MORE. PUSHED BY THE UNYIELDING LITTLE JEDI MASTER TO CONCENTRATE, TO OPEN HIMSELF TO THE FORCE... THE YOUNG MAN FROM TATOOINE BEGINS TO GROW IN WAYS HE NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE.

CAST

Luke Skywalker	MARK HAMILL
Han Solo	HARRISON FORD
Princess Leia	CARRIE FISHER
Lando Calrissian	BILLY DEE WILLIAMS
See Threepio (C-3PO)	ANTHONY DANIELS
Yoda	FRANK OZ
Darth Vader	DAVID PROWSE
Chewbacca	PETER MAYHEW
Artoo-Detoo (R2-D2)	KENNY BAKER
Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi	ALEC GUINNESS
Boba Fett	JEREMY BULLOCH
Lando's Aide	JOHN HOLLIS
Chief Ugnaught	JACK PURVIS
Snow Creature	DES WEBB
Performing Assistant for Yoda	KATHRYN MULLEN
Voice of Emperor	CLIVE REVILL

IMPERIAL FORCES

Admiral Piett	KENNETH COLLEY
General Veers	JULIAN GLOVER
Admiral Ozzel	MICHAEL SHEARD
Captain Needa	MICHAEL CULVER
Other Officers	JOHN DICKS, MILTON JOHNS, MARK JONES, OLIVER MAGUIRE, ROBIN SCOBEY

REBEL FORCES

General Rieekan	BRUCE BOA
Zev (Rogue 2)	CHRISTOPHER MALCOM
Wedge (Rogue 3)	DENNIS LAWSON
Hobbie (Rogue 4)	RICHARD OLDFIELD
Dak (Luke's Gunner)	JOHN MORTON
Janson (Wedge's Gunner)	IAN LISTON
Major Derlin	JOHN RATZENBERGER
Deck Lieutenant	JACK McKENZIE
Head Controller	JERRY HARTE
Other Officers	NORMAN CHANCER, NORWICH DUFF, RAY HASSETT, BRIGITTE KAHN, BURNELL TUCKER

PRODUCTION STAFF

Directed by	IRVIN KERSHNER
Produced by	GARY KURTZ
Screenplay by	LEIGH BRACKETT and LAWRENCE KASDAN
Story by	GEORGE LUCAS
Executive Producer	GEORGE LUCAS
Production Designer	NORMAN REYNOLDS
Director of Photography	PETER SUSCHITZKY B.S.C.
Edited by	PAUL HIRSCH A.C.E.
Special Visual Effects	BRIAN JOHNSON, RICHARD EDLUND
Associate Producers	ROBERT WATTS, JAMES BLOOM
Music by	JOHN WILLIAMS Performed by the London Symphony Orchestra
Design Consultant and Conceptual Artist	RALPH McQUARRIE
Art Directors	LESLIE DILLEY, HARRY LANGE, ALAN TOMKINS
Set Decorator	MICHAEL FORD

Production Supervisor	BRUCE SHARMAN
Operating Cameramen	KELVIN PIKE, DAVID GARFATH
Make-up and Special Creature Design	STUART FREEBORN
Costume Designer	JOHN MOLLO
Property Master	FRANK BRUTON
Sound Design and Supervising Sound Effects Editor	BEN BURTT
First Assistant Director	DAVID TOMBLIN
Matte Photography Consultant	STANLEY SAYER B.S.C.
Gaffer	LAURIE SNANE
	Lighting Equipment and Crew from Lee Electric
Chief Make-up Artist	GRAHAM FREEBORN
Wardrobe Supervisor	TINY NICHOLLS
Property Supervisor	CHARLES TORBETT
Construction Manager	BILL WELCH
Sound Editors	RICHARD BURROW, TERESA ECKTON, BONNIE KOEHLER
Production Sound	PETER SUTTON
Re-Recording	BILL VARNEY, STEVE MASLOW, GREGG LANDACKER
Music Recording	ERIC TOMLINSON
Orchestrations	HERBERT W SPENCER
Supervising Music Editor	KENNETH WANNBERG
Assistant Production Manager	Patricia Carr
Second Assistant Directors	STEVE LANNING, ROY BUTTON
Location Manager	PHILIP KOHLER
Continuity	KAY RAWLINGS, PAMELA MANN
Casting	IRENE LAMB, TERRY LIEBLING, BOB EDMISTON
Stunt Coordinator	PETER DIAMOND
Production Accountant	RON PHIPPS
Unit Publicist	ALAN ARNOLD
Second Unit Directors	HARLEY COKLISS, PETER MacDONALD, JOHN BARRY
Second Unit Cameramen	CHRIS MENGES, GEOFF GLOVER
Second Unit Assistant Directors	DOMINIC FULFORD, BILL WESTLEY, OLA SOLUM

PRODUCTION AND MECHANICAL EFFECTS UNIT

Mechanical Effects Supervision	NICK ALLDER
Location Unit Supervisor	ALLAN BRYCE
Senior Effects Technicians	NEIL SWAN, DAVE WATKINS
Robot Fabrication and Supervision	ANDREW KELLY, RON HONE

MINIATURE AND OPTICAL EFFECTS UNIT

Effects Director of Photography	DENNIS MUREN
Effects Cameramen	KEN RALSTON, JIM VEILLEUX
Optical Photography Supervisor	BRUCE NICHOLSON
Optical Printer Operators	DAVID BERRY, KENNETH SMITH, DONALD CLARK
Art Director - Visual Effects	JOE JOHNSTON
Stop Motion Animation	JOHN BERG, PHIL TIPPETT
Matte Painting Supervisor	HARRISON ELLENSHAW
Matte Artists	RALPH McQUARRIE, MICHAEL PANGRAZIO
Chief Model Maker	LORNE PETERSON
Modelshop Foreman	STEVE GAWLEY
Animation and Rotoscope Supervisor	PETER KURAN
Visual Effects Editorial Supervisor	CONRAD BUFF
Production Administrator	DICK GALLEGLY
Production Accountant	RAY SCALICE
Electronics Systems Designer	JERRY JEFFRESS
Special Project Coordinator	STUART ZIFF
Equipment Engineering Supervisor	GENE WHITEMAN
Design Engineer	MIKE BOLLES
Supervising Stage Technician	T.E. MOEHNKE
Miniature Pyrotechnics	JOSEPH VISKOCIL, DAVE PIER, THAINE MORRIS

Photographed on the Hardangerjokulen Glacier, Finse, Norway
and at EMI Elstree Studios, Borehamwood, England

Music Recorded at Anvil Studios, Denham, England

Re-Recording at Samuel Goldwyn Studios, Los Angeles, California

Filmed in Panavision® Colour by Rank Film Laboratories® Prints by Deluxe®

Recorded in Dolby Stereo®

Special Visual Effects Produced at Industrial Light and Magic, Marin County, California

Visual Effects Filmed in VistaVision® Lenses by Nikon®

A Lucasfilm Ltd. Production A Twentieth Century Fox Release

Copyright 1980 Lucasfilm Ltd.

The Life and Times (and Death?) of the Legendary Justice Society of America

by David M. Singer

In 1956, D.C. was faced with a dilemma. The first three issues of a new comic magazine called *Showcase* had gone nowhere with three loser concepts: *Firefighters*, *King of the Wild*, and *The Frogmen*. They needed something eyecatching for issue #4. With an eye to the successful debut of The Martian Manhunter in *Detective #225* (the first of the Silver Age Super heroes), D.C. decided to use a new superhero in *Showcase #4*.

All-Flash Comics had been one of D.C.'s most successful titles in the 40's and the Flash, one of the most popular heroes. Editor Julius Schwartz had been the editor for the original Flash's adventures, as well as those of most of the other Golden Age superhero comic books, and volunteered to handle the assignment.

Schwartz, Robert Kanigher (writer), Carmine Infantino (pencils) and Joe Kubert (inks) created a new Flash. The way they explained the appearance of a second Flash was by relegating the first Flash and his fellow Justice Society members, to being comic book characters, rather than "real" characters about whose adventures readers were informed. The new Flash was a comic book collector who had read the adventures of the Flash (original), as a child.

Showcase #4 was the September-October, 1956 issue and it was a big success. The Flash made subsequent appearances in *Showcase* issues #8, #13 and #14. Finally in December of 1959, the Flash was given his own comic book. The numbers were continued from that of the old *All-Flash Comics*, so issue #105 (February-March, 1959) was the first issue of the new Flash's comic.

Flushed with success, Schwartz then teamed up with Gil Kane (artist), and John Broome (writer) to revive the Green Lantern. Green Lantern appeared in *Showcase* #s 22, 23, and 24, and was given his own comic, Green Lantern #1, in August of 1960.

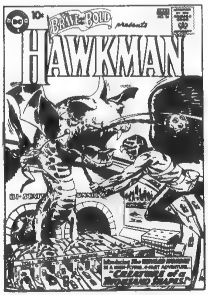
On a roll, Schwartz then revived the Justice Society of America in the format of the Justice league of America, in *The Brave and The Bold* issues #28, 29 and 30. (February-March, 1960 to June-July, 1960). *Justice League of America* came out in the Summer of 1960. The Justice League of America included Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, Martian Manhunter, and Aquaman as members. With the exeption of Green Arrow and the Blackhawks, the J.L.A. represented every superhero D.C. had, to that point. All but the Martian Manhunter and Aquaman had been members of the Justice Society of America.

Schwartz, with author Gardner Fox, and artist Joe Kubert, brought back Hawkman in issues #34, 35, 36, 42, 43 and 44 of *The Brave and The Bold*, and gave him his own comic, *Hawkman #1*, in 1964.

Showcase #s 34, 35 and 36 presented the new Atom, and it was issue #34 which created a minor, but significant ripple among readers. A biography of the original Atom, and a picture of the Atom with his fellow Justice Society members was included in the issue. As a decade had passed since the final issue of *All-Star Comics* (#57) hit the stands in 1951, most comic book readers were unfamiliar with the Justice Society. Imagine, an entire organization of superheroes not being used! Not for long.

Schwartz was just getting warmed up, and the mail from the excited fans spurred him on.

The two Flash's met in *Flash* #123 (September, 1961). They met again in *Flash* #129 (June, 1962) and Flash #137, with the Justice Society of



Copyrighted 1980 David Singer

America appearing in the latter two. Finally, in *Justice League* #21 and 22, the Justice League and Justice Society teamed up in "Crisis on Earth-One" and "Crisis on Earth-Two" respectively. Doctor Fate, Hawkman, Atom, Black Canary, Hourman, and Green Lantern were the J.S.A. members involved.

Following this success, Doctor Fate and Hourman teamed up in Showcase #55 and 56 (1965) and Starman and Black Canary teamed up in *The Brave and The Bold* #s 61 and 62 (1965). The Spectre was revived and appeared in *Showcases* #s 60, 61 and 62 (1966). Green Lantern, Atom and Flash began to receive their Earth-Two counter parts in their respective comics, as occasional guest stars. The Spectre got his own comic in 1967, and in issue #3 of *Spectre*, Wildcat was re-introduced.

Beginning with the aforementioned J.L.A. #21, the tradition of an annual J.L.A.—J.S.A. teamup was begun. *Justice League of America* #s 30 and 31, 37 and 38, 46 and 47, 55 and 56, 64 and 65, 73 and 74, 82, and 83, 91 and 92, 100 and 101, 107 and 108, 113, 123 and 124, 135 and 136 and 137, 147 and 148, 159 and 160, and 171 and 172 have all featured members of the Justice Society as guest co-stars.

Throughout the 1960's and mid-way into the 1970s the J.S.A. as a group, and its members as individuals, were very "hot", so in the Winter of 1975, *All-Star Comics* was revived after a nearly 25 year absence, with issue #58 (January 1976). The J.S.A. had come full circle.

There were several reasons for the initial appeal of the Earth-Two heroes. The most basic appeal being the nature of Gardener Fox' Earth-One—Earth-Two creation. Fox, in an attempt to explain how Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman could have been J.S.A. members, and fought during World War II, and at the same time be youthful J.L.A. members with no prior knowledge of the J.S.A., explained that there were numerous Earths, each located at the same coordinates in the Universe, but on different vibratory planes of existence. It was the vibratory powers of the two Flashes which initially allowed for team-ups between Flash and the J.S.A.

In theory, both Earth-One (J.L.A.) and Earth-Two (J.S.A.) were nearly identical, with several not too significant differences. Earth-Two's heroes had been born a generation earlier than had Earth-One's heroes. Thus, the Superman, the Batman, the Wonder Woman, Green Arrow, etc., who had appeared during the 1930s, 1940s, and the early part of the 1950s were in fact the Earth-Two heroes. This

DC
presents
SPECTRE
12
A BOOK-LENGTH ADVENTURE BEYOND THE SINISTER BARRIER!
THEY FOUGHT for POSSESSION of EARTH — with EARTH ITSELF AS THE WEAPON!

"they never complained, but we all knew that after a successful mission, the J.S.A. heroes limped home, screaming for the Ben-Gay and a whirlpool bath."

created several new problems, but only for the older readers who remembered those early adventures.

Under Fox' plan, the Superman of Earth-Two was the Superman of *Action* #1: He was able to jump (not fly), possessing extraordinary (but finite) strength and was only semi-invulnerable. This would have worked, except Superman's powers began to develop and expand during the 1940s. By 1941, Superman was running at the speed of light, and by 1943 Superman was flying. Thus, the Earth-Two Superman shold have been replaced by the Earth-One Superman by the early to mid 1940s, but could not be, because he continued to be associated with the J.S.A. heroes though 1951.

In addition to the dual world set up, the J.S.A. generated reader appeal due to its newness. Characters like Doctor Fate, Hourman, Spectre and Starman had no Earth-One counterparts. To the younger readers, it was as if an entire new line of comic books had been created overnight. And to add to this attraction, these heroes already had a long tradition behind them. It was like meeting that cousin you had heard about for years, but never before met, for the first time.

As a further bonus, the J.S.A. reeked of nobility and class. There was something noble and tragic about a group of men and women, heroes all, who after devoting the best years of their lives to the public welfare, came out of retirement in their mid-fifties to once again fight for us all. They never complained, but we all knew that after a successful mission, the J.S.A. heroes limped home, screaming for the Ben-Gay and a whirlpool bath.

Even their billing struck a chord with us. They were always the "legendary Justice Society." How can you turn your backs on a legend?

Finally, they were given low visibility. One two-part team-up with the J.L.A. each year, and a couple of individual guest appearances in *Flash*, *Atom*, *Green Lantern*, *The Brave and The Bold*, or *Showcase*. Each new appearance was a major event.

So what happened? Just 4½ years ago, the J.L.A. was at its peak. *All-Star* had been revived. Today? *All-Star* is cancelled, and after a brief stint as a regular feature in *Adventure*, the J.S.A. now finds itself without a comic it can call home.

The reasons for the disaffection of the fans are many. The most basic problem was that after more than a dozen years since their revival, the J.S.A. had begun to lose its uniqueness. "Everyone" knew that the Sandman's secret identity was that of playboy Wesley Dodds, that when

"Tick-Tock" Tyler took a Miraclo pill, he would remain a super energized Hourman for a mere 60 minutes, and that Doctor Fate lived in Salem with his wife Inza Nelson. While the appearance of certain less frequently featured J.S.A. members might be more eagerly awaited than those of other heroes, the J.S.A., on the whole, was becoming simply just another superhero club.

A second problem was their mystique. It was bad enough that after a decade of post-retirement activity, the fans no longer viewed the J.S.A. as a resurrected group from the late 1940s but as a group of super heroes with whom they had grown up. But the editors at D.C. helped this change in perception even further along! As late as *Justice League of America* #s 100–101, the J.S.A. was still being referred to as "Legendary." To quote the Flash (Earth-One) as he introduces Elongated Man to the J.S.A. for the first time: "Ralph Dibney, permit me to introduce the legendary Justice Society of America." Even to the J.L.A., the J.S.A. was legendary. But by *J.L.A.* #'s 135, 136 and 137, this had ended. The J.S.A. was being scripted to act like just another superhero group.

Not only was the "legendary" gone, but so were the age differences. If anything, the J.S.A., because they had not been around as long as the J.L.A., seemed younger! No longer were there references which would remind the reader of the heritage of the J.S.A.

This was not all D.C.'s fault. The facts simply did not allow a group, which had been revived a dozen years ago, to be referred to as having come out of retirement.

No longer new. No longer unique. No longer legendary. No longer old. The only thing carrying the J.S.A. was its tradition and its particular members. It was at this point, when the J.S.A. had achieved mass saturation and had nowhere to go but down, that *All-Star* was revived.

All-Star #58's front cover showed Flash, Doctor Fate Wildcat, and Green Lantern lying on a desolate plain, unconscious. Someone had defeated the J.S.A. In the background, but rushing to the fore, are Power Girl, Robin and Star Spangled Kid. The Kid (carrying Star Man's cosmic rod!) is shouting: "Maybe you were too tough for the Justice Society . . .but mister, now you've got to face the Super Squad." Now is that any way to sell a group of heroes? As has beens?

To make matters worse, D.C. revived *All-Star Comics*, but not the J.S.A. The comic's title read: All-Star Comics Presents . . .Super Squad. Featuring the Justice Society of America.

Quoting Power Girl, from the text in #58, "For the time being, don't consider yourself part of the J.S.A., Wildcat. Pretend you are part of a new team. A Strike Force . . .composed of the J.S.A. and we three new heroes: Robin, Star Spangled Kid and me . . .You know . . .A Super Squad!" To which Wildcat, representing the opinion of the J.S.A. replies: "Swell. Now we know our name." If the J.S.A. doesn't give a damn, why should the fans?

In essence, D.C. was scrapping the J.S.A., and using some of the cannibilized remains (its members) to populate a new group of heroes. The J.S.A. had thus been further reduced. Now it wasn't just another superhero group, but *part* of just another superhero group.

And still worse. The original appeal inherent in the J.S.A. had been that the characters were very different from the J.L.A.'s members: Sandman, Star Man, Spectre, Johnny Thunder, Mr. Terrific, Hourman. So who are the members of the Super Squad? Flash, Green Lantern. Hawkman, Robin, Power Girl (Super Girl), Wildcat (Batman?) Doctor Fate, and Dr. Mid-Night. But the fans were not satisfied. They wanted other heroes. And D.C. complied. Kind of. After several issues, they added Superman and Hourman. And then they added the word "legendary" to the cover. The J.S.A. was once more the legendary Justice Society of America. In issues #67 and #69, Bruce Wayne, Wonder Woman and Star Man were added. And best of all, the magic was back.

With Paul Levitz taking over the scripting chores from Gerry Conway, in issue #63, the J.S.A. had come full circle. Wonder Woman was referred to as having devoted four decades in the service of the United States. (This places her in her 60's.) Dr. Fate reminds Hourman that they have fought side-by-side for more years than Robin, Power Girl, etc. have lived. Superman is referred to as "the grey haired guardian who was the first of their kind (superheroes)," and that in a sense, all subsequent heroes are his children.

Believe it or not, it gets even worse.

All-Star #59, was the second part of the premiere tale begun in #58. At the end of #59, with the bad guys defeated, Wildcat says, "The way it looks to me, its just possible you youngsters can learn something from us old pros. Seeing as how your're still wet behind the ears." Power Girl replies: "Wet behind where? It seems you're forgetting something Wildcat. Like who put out Brainwave's Chinese Volcano, who closed up the Seattle earthquake, who uncovered the geyser illusion, who pushed the..." Wildcat: "Aw nuts. Kids today just ain't got no respect." The other members of the J.S.A.—Super Squad just laugh.

Power Girl was right. The J.S.A. members had been shown up for the second straight issue of *All-Star Comics*.

And still it gets worse. The J.S.A. already struggling to remind us that they had fought in World War II, was reduced to six members: Hawkman, Dr. Mid-Night, Doctor Fate, Wildcat, Flash and Green Lantern. Dr. Fate is immortal and, next to Atom, Wildcat is the youngest hero in the J.S.A. Added to this group are Robin, Power Girl and Star Spangled Kid. Not exactly the Geritol crowd, is it?

The members of the Justice League of America meet the members of the Justice Society of America in "Crises on Earth-One/Crises on Earth-Two (J.L.A. #s 21 & 22)

Gotham City, February 1976-
The legendary Justice Society of America was found murdered today at 75 Rockefeller Plaza. Police Commissioner Wayne could not be found for comment. Police authorities are unable to explain the Commissioner's disappearance, but say they are sure that it is unrelated to the current crisis...

The members of the legendary Justice Society of America, as they will be fondly remembered, prior to their untimely demise in the revived All-Star Comics series.

Shop or Play Pinball at the

COMIC ART GALLERY

- NEW COMICS TWO WEEKS EARLY! THE LATEST IN SUPERHERO & SCIENCE FICTION.
- THOUSANDS OF BACK ISSUES OF COMICS AND MAGAZINES. RARE COLLECTOR'S ITEMS.
- TRADING CARDS. BASEBALL CARDS.
- POSTERS, MODEL KITS, TOYS AND IRONONS, TOO!

COME CHECK OUT OUR PINBALL MACHINES!

We are just a few minutes away from Marvel Comics headquarters, so you can meet the people who create the comics; they do their shopping here! So should you.

Rock comics, magazines, fanzines, too. Reasonable prices.

Manhattan:
Comic Art Gallery
139 E. 58th St. (2nd Floor)
759-6955

Store Hours:
Monday 12:30-5:30
Tuesday Closed
Wed.-Fri. 11:00-6:30
Saturday 11:30-5:30
Sunday Closed

In Queens visit:
Astoria Comics
31-86 43rd St.
274-1999

Store Hours:
Mon.-Fri 3:00-7:00
Saturday 12:00-7:00
Sunday 1:00-6:00

The J.S.A. was everything a reader could want. Tradition, nobility, age honor, and experience flowed from the pen of Paul Levitz.

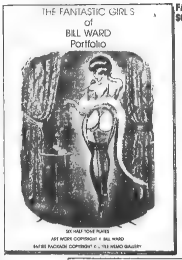
Alas, it was all for naught. Conway and D.C. had so devastated the J.S.A., that the fans could no longer see the gold underneath the tarnish. Once you are no longer a legend, you cannot be legendary. Once you are a has been, you can never again be the lead character. Once you have been a failure, you can never be considered invincible. *All-Star* #74 was the last issue printed.

The J.S.A. moved to *Adventure Comics* in issue #461 and ran through #466. Then it was dropped for good. Shed a tear for what could have been, shed a tear for what might have been. But cry not for what was. The tradition of the J.S.A. was a long and proud one. And Paul Levitz insured that it went out, not as Conway's has beens, but as the class act it deserved to be. ●

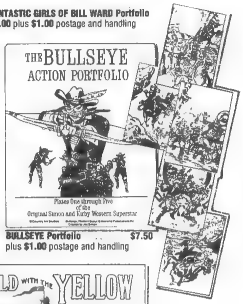
THE LITTLE NEMO SHOP & GALLERY

THE MOST ORIGINAL STORE IN THE COUNTRY

- ★ LATEST COMICS — EARLY!
- ★ BACK ISSUES LATEST BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
- ★ SCIENCE FICTION
- ★ POSTERS
- ★ PRINTS
- ★ ORIGINAL COMIC BOOK ART
- ★ ORIGINAL COMIC STRIP ART
- ★ EDITORIAL ART
- ★ PANELS
- ★ TOP AMERICAN ILLUSTRATIONS
- ★ PULP ART
- ★ PIN-UP ART
- ★ AND MUCH, MORE.

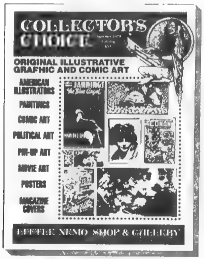


FANTASTIC GIRLS OF BILL WARD Portfolio
$6.00 plus **$1.00** postage and handling



BULLSEYE Portfolio **$7.50**
plus **$1.00** postage and handling

YELLOW KID SWATCH
in full color, 7" approx. 18"x24"
Mailed in a tube
$4.00 plus **$1.00** postage and handling.



COLLECTOR'S CHOICE — A great reference book, a must for all serious collectors of original art . . . . **90 fully illustrated pages . . . $5.00** plus **$1.00** postage and handling.

Still available — **CARTOONIST & ILLUSTRATORS PORTFOLIO** #2. Fully illustrated 72 page catalog . . . . . **$3.50** plus **$1.00** postage and handling.

Available Soon:
JAMES BOND FIGURE SETS
From Dr. No, Thunderball and Goldfinger. plus accessories.

Now in preparation:
COLLECTOR'S CHOICE #2

SPACEMEN & SPACE MAIDENS PORTFOLIO
By Gray Morrow

WATCH FOR THEM!

LITTLE NEMO SHOP & GALLERY

JOSEPH PARENTE 108-30 ASCAN AVENUE FOREST HILLS, N.Y 11375 (212) 263-5296 HOURS 10:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Review

Part of the great marketing explosion of the 70's, was an expansion into the comic strip field. Spider-Man, Marvel's most popular character was a logical choice as the first attempt to adapt the Marvel formula to the rigid format of newspaper strips. Pocket books in a grand tradition dating back to *Famous Funnies*, has re-issued the stips's first two installments in paperback with the promise of more to come.

Stan Lee, (there are unconfirmed rumors circulating that another writer is "ghosting" the strip) had two major problems at the outset of the project and neither one was adequately solved. To try to compress 15 years of carefully outlined and detailed history into the clipped, rapid style of comic strip story telling, is a monumental, if not impossible task. Even if the substance of this wealth of past experience could be translated, the subtleties, the inner conflicts, the epic quality of those events must be lost.

One of the unfortunate results though, of the current evolution in comics from what were small "family" operated businesses to what are now subsidiaries of mammoth corporations, is the lack of a single consistency governing all of a company's products and its characters. In the case of the Spider-Man strip, consistency with the current Spider-Man as he appears in the comics is a minor consideration. (Naturally we are not referring to continuity but to simple conistency.).

The Spider-Man newspaper strip is timeless. Nominally, the stories are intended to be contemporanious with the news on the front page. The opening story in which Dr. Doom journeyed to New York to offer the UN help against the rising danger of terrorism is plotted with this goal in mind. The emphasis on the appearances of such political figures as Anwar Sadat, Yasser Arafat, Elliot Trudeau, Henry Kissinger and the ever present Abe Beame, reinforce this perception of an exaggeration of the real world.

But in order to appeal to the widest possible readership, or the lowest common denominator, 15 years of Peter Parker's life has been condensed into the usual limbo-like timelessness which makes the funny pages so predictable. The strip is locked, ironically enough, into a period equivalent in Peter's life to John Romita's first issues as the book's regular penciller after Steve Ditko had left Marvel.

COMICS
#1
THE GREAT NEWSPAPER STRIP IN F · L R
POCKET 83489-4 $2.50
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
by STAN LEE & JOHN ROMITA
MY FIST--IT ALMOST SHATTERED AGAINST HIS ARMOR
THE POWER OF DOOM!
NOTHING CAN HOLD ME BACK!
PETER--I'M HERE!

Betty Brant (complete with mid-60's hairstyle) is J. Johah Jameson's secretary; Peter is dating Mary Jane with the proud approval of Anna Watson, and Peter appears to be only a freshman or sophmore at E.S.U. Gone are any references to Peter's studies, Flash Thompson, Harry Osborn or any of the wonderful characters that have given *The Amazing Spider-Man* the vitality which has made it so popular over the years. Instead, the strip is pared down to only the absolute essentials, which push the very now familiar plots along to their inevitable conclusions.

Another problem that is inherent in any adaption from one medium to another is

the successful translation of the style and mood that made the original so successful. The clever quips, "hip" dialogue, "we are all part of the same family" feel of the original Spider-Man falls flat in a medium, in which a single scene may be broken up over a full week and each new scrap of information repeated in 2 or 3 different ways. The three panel daily strip simply does not allow for the "cuteness" or "comraderie" that so characterizes Marvel.

Also lost is Parker's almost neurotic self-doubt and guilt that so marks the Spider-Man strip and Marvel's basic approach to the problems of the superhero. Scenes that in a comic book bordered on the honest, through introspection of the classic tragic hero, have become stiff and unnatural in the newspaper strip.

Parker's worries are so trivial, that their effect is to lower the strip to the level of cheap melodrama, this bitter cynicism, like the entire book, is condensed into its most basic components. The inadequacies of such a solution are apparent when Spider-Man must sum up his worries in such comic stip shorthand as: "Boy if luck was food, I'd starve to death"

One other difficulty with the comic strip is that as each super-being is introduced, their origin must be retold for the new readers. This is a tedious convention at best and it reaches the height of its absurdity when "Spider-Man" recalls Dr. Doom's origin, which he could know nothing about.

The two stories included in the volume are plot-oriented tales loosely based on the Marvel universe. In the first story, J. Jónah Jameson convinces Dr. Doom to speak out at the UN against terrorism and to also elimiante Spider-Man when he's in town. Doom, of course, has other plans.

The second story is a sequel to Dr. Octopus's first meeting with Aunt May (*Spider-Man* # 54, 55, & 56,) in which the trusting old lady befriends the good doctor. Dr. Octopus is using this friendship for his personal gain under the close scrutiny of a worried Peter Parker.

Without doubt the most pleasant treat that the Spider-Man strip and this book has to offer is the reuniting of Spider-Man and John Romita. Ten years after Romita's first encounter with the character, his approach is still fresh, vibrant and imaginative.

There is a true lighter-than-air freedom in Romita's interpretation. His Spider-Man glides effortlessly through space, he doesn't cling to walls, he grazes against them, he springs, rather than leaps. While Ditko's Spider-Man travelled with the skill of a magnificent acrobat, Romita's Spider-Man moves with the grace of the natural athelete.

Despite the considerable hinderance of unimaginative scripting, Romita manages to keep the story interesting. This cinematic story telling style, with its dynamic use of high and low angles and reverse cutting, gives *The Amazing Spider-Man* a look unlike any other newspaper strip.

One of the best sequences in the book is Spidey's approach to the UN where Dr. Doom is holding a number of major diplomats hostage. Romita's smooth transition as he takes us across New York City to the UN in six panels is a breathless suspension of the dictum that man is forever destined to remain earthbound.

The Amazing Spider-Man newspaper strip is Marvel's first venture into comics' most traditional format. Although the strip reads well (due mostly to John Romita's art work), it is not successful in translating the popular Marvel formula. Completists and John Romita fans enjoy, all others beware of the $2.50 price tag.

BATCAVE®
COMIC BOOK STORES
Now in 3 Convenient Locations!

- **Comic Books - Old & New**
- **Movie Posters**
- **B&W/Color Glossy Photos**
- **Baseball Cards**
- **Science-Fiction Paperbacks**

All stores open 7 days a week!

BATCAVE (Manhattan)
120 West 3rd Street
New York, New York 10012
(Between Ave. of Americas & McDougal Street, next to the NIGHT OWL)
☎(212) 674-8474

BATCAVE (Nassau)
11-10 Old Country Road
Plainview, L.I., N.Y.
(½ mile east of Seaford - Oyster Bay Expressway)
☎(516) 681-5613

BATCAVE (Suffolk)
1670-D Sunrise Highway
Bay Shore, N.Y. 11706
(In Child World Shopping Center, ½ block from South Shore Mall)
☎(516) 665-4342

THE JAMES BURNS MEDIA REPORT

Copyrighted 1980 James Burns

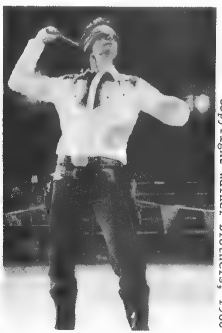
Audiences are currently jamming theatres to see the world's top box office attraction, Clint Eastwood, in his latest hit, *Bronco Billy*, which the actor also directed. Eastwood portrays the title role, the owner of a traveling Wild West show who performs spectacular riding and shooting stunts, but unlike most of Clint's other movies, this film follows *Every Which Way But Loose*'s lead in that the emphasis is on *comedy*.

"I don't feel that simply because you've done a few westerns that you should always play cowboys, or that because you did a good job portraying a police officer that you should always play cops, regardless of how successful those films might have been," says Eastwood. "When I read the script for *Every Which Way But Loose*, I decided that I really liked it and I wanted to make a film out of it. Now a lot of people didn't like it and I took that advice into consideration. However, I've always enjoyed movies that have a sense of fun about them and I thought that this was the script for me to take into that area. Naturally, the success of *Every Which Way But Loose* makes a film like *Bronco Billy* easier to make, decision-wise, but first of all, I like the story, so I would have made *Bronco Billy* anyway, whether I had made the other film or not."

Does that mean that it will be a while before Clint portrays the type of "Man With No Name" or "Dirty Harry" characters that made him famous?

"I wouldn't mind doing another film like that if the story's right," Eastwood told *Newsday*'s Wayne Robins, "but I have to admit that I haven't found a really good script along those lines for a while. That's probably why I haven't done it. The new films offer a wide er horizon, a more expansive appeal. But if somebody did a story for a great cop drama that I thought spoke well about something, I think I'd be intrigued by it."

Clint Eastwood is currently shooting the sequel to *Every Which Way But Loose*, *Any Which Way You Can*, for national release this Christmas.



Copyright Warner Brothers, 1980

Now that audiences' space fantasy appetities have been satisfied by *The Empire Strikes Back*, they are eagerly awaiting the next *Star Wars* saga chapter, tentatively titled *The Revenge of a Jedi*. While Gary Kurtz, *Star Wars* producer, has announced that the sequel won't go into pre-production until January, word has it that *Revenge* is *already* being storyboarded and that filming will start in December so that the movie can be released *two years* from now, instead of the three that it took for the first sequel to reach theatres. *The Revenge of a Jedi* will reportedly deal with "Han's rescue from Jabba the Hut on Tatooine and Luke's further mastering of the Force."

Copyright Lucasfilm Ltd. 1980

The success of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease* has propelled Hollywood's moguls to determine rock-oriented films as their next trend. If this summer's numerous musical releases—including *the Blues Brothers, Roadie, Can't Stop the Music,* and *Honeysuckle Rose*—are successful, the production of further celluloid rock is guaranteed.

One movie that *everyone* will be using as a gage by which to measure the prospects for further big-budgeted musicaks is Universal's *Xanadu*, because it has all the "right" ingredients for success. The filim fronts a modern singing star, Olivia Newton John, and a song and dance man whose name is virtually synonomous with the American screen musical, Gene Kelly. *Xanadu*'s score, a blend of ballads and rock, was composed by Jeff Lynne (Electric Light Orchestra), who also sings five original tunes on the movie's soundtrack. Five *additional* songs were written for Olivia Newton John by John Farrar, producer of her nine albums and author of her hits, "Have You Never Been Mellow," "You're the One That I Want," "Hopelessly Devoted to You," and "A Little More Love."

"*Xanadu* started off as a roller-disco picture," reveals Lee Kramer, the film's executive producer and Olivia Newton John's business manager. "Once we showed some interest in the film, the project began to go through a complete metamorphosis and became a beautiful musical *fantasy*. We eliminated disco *altogether*. *We* really wanted to make an old fashioned Hollywood musical. Without going into much detail, the plot concerns a young man (Micheal Beck), who has the dream of building an incredible 'fun' palace. Olivia plays one of the nine muses from Greek mythology—a kind of angel—who comes down to earth and helps these dreams come true. Gene Kelly plays an *old man* type character. All of these elements have made the movie something *special*. *Xanadu* now has a pristine elegance."

Copyright Universal Studios 1980

Copyright United Artists Corporation, 1980

A few months ago, Cubby Broccoli, producer of the James Bond films, told *Variety*, the show business trade paper, "I'm considering changing Bonds. Roger Moore and I are very close friends and I like him very much. But he does a lot of other pictures, some not very successful. Besides, his agent seems to follow Sean Connery's agent in asking for more money. It would not be the first time I've changed Bonds. My agent up in the sky is watching over me. Maybe he is telling m to change old 007."

Appartently this statement was only a ruse to get Moore's representatives to lower their salary demands, for on a recent *Tonight Show* appearance, Roger Moore said, "Oh, I'll be doing the next Bond film. We're negotiating now and we've gotten to the point in our contract discussions where I'm deciding what color wallpaper by dressing room should have."

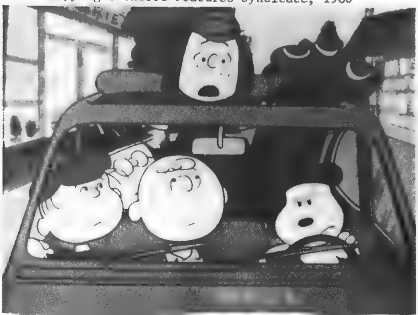
The twelfth 007 feature will be *For Your Eyes Only*, based on one of Ian Fleming's few James Bond short stories. The short concerns Bond taking on M's personal vendetta against some gangsters and going to Canada to assinate them. Since the current bond films have absolutely *nothing* to do with the Fleming books, it is likely that screenwriter Richard Maibaum will scrap the original plot entirely. Rumors report that Broccoli's *For Your Eyes Only* will pit 007 against S.P.E.C.T.R.E. (The Special Executives for Counterintelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion), for the first time since *Diamonds Are Forever*. The grape-vine also indicates that Jaws (Richard Kiel), will temporarily team up with Bond in the agent's attempts to thwart evil.

Paramount Pictures is celebrating the 30th anniversary of Charles M. Schultz's *Peanuts* with their summer release of *Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown (And Don't Come Back)*, the fourth *Peanuts* inspired feature film. The full-length animated movie involves Charlie Brown, Linus van Pelt, Peppermint Patty, and Marcie being selected to go to France for two weeks as part of an exchange program. Along with Snoopy and Woodstock, the foursome encounter the hassles of travelling through Europe and the secret of a myterious chateau.

The film was produced by Lee Mendelsohn and Bil Melendez and written by Schultz, the same creative troika that's produced the previous features and *Peanuts*' twenty television specials.

Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown (And Don't Come Back!) is a totally new experience," says Mendelsohn. "Nothing in the motion picture has ever appeared in any comic strip or television show—it is all original, wholly new material. We always try as best we can to improve the product. Especially Charles Schultz, who never sits still. We try to improve, to take chances, to take risks to make a better product. There's a lot more adventure and even suspense in this film than we've ever had before. We attempt to grow and change with the times."

Copyright United Features Syndicate, 1980



This August, Columbia Pictures will distribute Steven Spielberg's reedited *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The director shot new footage last February in White Sands, New Mexico that's "packed with special effects." Another new scene shot in 1979 reportedly

shows the aliens inside their mothership as they approach Devil's Tower.

"About five minutes of the original movie will be deleted," Spielberg told *Variety*, "and the new footage will total abut seven minutes. The new scenes are really a luxurious experiment."

Some original footage that was cut out of *Close Encounter's* first print might also be added. It's rumored that this includes sections showing the alien spacecraft ourside of earth's orbit, establishing that they have base on the dark side of the moon (the reason for why the manned moon expeditions never landed there). A plethora of new merchandising is expected to hit toy stores in time for Columbia's rerelease.

Copyright Columbia Pictures 1980

Copyright Universal Studios 1980

Produer/director/writer Phil DeGuere's (CBS-TV's *SDr. Strange* pilot) adaptation of Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End* for Universal and ABC is temporarily in limbo.

"Universal put it on the back burner back in December," says DeGuere; they wanted to see how *Star Trek* and *The Black Hole* would do. Now, maybe they're waiting to see how *The Empire Strikes Back* will do at the box offiice. Also, I think Universal had to make a decision whether to support Dino De Laurentiis' *Flash Gordon* and *Dune* or *Childhood's End*. For the moment, they've gone with Dino."

Childhood's End concerns man's encounter of an apparently superior race named the Overlords and the future development of mankind. The film has already gone through active pre-production, including several concept paintings created by Neal Adams. DeGuere projects that the film will cost anywhere from $5 to $30 million.

"Due to the cost, I believe Universal might be contemplating doing it as a theatrical feature, if *Flash Gordon* does well." Phil continues. "I get calls everyday from production companies interested in doing *Childhood's End*, but Universal can't seriously consider coproducing or selling the project until someone comes up with all the necessary money."

One film that will *never* be produced is *The Shining II*. Despite *The Shining*'s phenomenonal success, producer/director Stanley Kubrick told writer John Hofsess, "I couldn't grow as a director and make sequels. It's like trying to have your cake and eat it too."

Copyright Warner Brothers, 1980

Steve McQueen will hit the screens in August in producer Mort Engelberg's and director Buzz Kulik's *The Hunter*. McQueen plays Ralph "Papa" Thorson, a real life bounty hunter who in three decades has apprehended more than 5,000 fugitives from justice, people who jumped bail rather than appear in court.

"The role was tailor-made for Steve," says a Paramount official. "He played a bounty hunter for three years in *Wanted—Dead or Alive*, the TV show that made him a star. And the words used to describe Thorson—picaresque, loner, one-of-a-kind—are terms applied to McQueen. At a time when larger than life heroes seem to have disappeared from the screen, McQueen, like Thorson, is the last of a breed, an actor in the dynamic mold of Cooper, Gable, Tracy, and Bogart."

Some of McQueen's own personality was incorporated into the film's characterization, including the actor's love for old cars and toys. But, perhaps more importantly, *The Hunter* marks Steve's first escapist action feature since 1974's *The Towering Inferno*. And despite any other criticism *The Huner* might receive, it is *definitely* an *entertaining* movie.

"When I first found out about "Papa" Thorson," says Mort Engleberg, "I realized that if ever there was material for an explosive film, this was it." □

Copyright Paramount Pictures 1980

WEST SIDE COMICS
BRIZAP... CATALOG... 50¢! BRIZZZ
COMICS... YUM! YUM!
EVERYBODY'S MARCHING DOWN TO
WEST SIDE COMICS!
JOIN THE PARADE! 107 WEST 86TH ST. NYC
ZIP: 10024 • TEL: 212-724-0432 ...
—KOUFG '80

CHATTING
with
Michael Fleisher
Interview by David M. Singer

On Monday, May 26th, at exactly 7:00 P.M., comic book writer, novelist, and weaver of Gothic tales extraordinaire Michael Fleisher invited me into his home. Michael, an intensely brilliant, but nevertheless affable young man of 37, proved to be the perfect host. He even served a coffee cake after the interview!

Fleisher, who currently scripts *Spider Woman*, *Ghost Rider*, *Jonah Hex*, and other comics, proved to be even more interesting a person than the comic book characters he writes about. Join me now while I chat with Michael Fleisher.

DAVE: How long have you been earning your living as a writer?

MIKE: I've been earning my living exclusively as a writer since 1968.

DAVE: And how long was it before you wrote your first comic book script?

MIKE: I had my first comic book assignment in 1970.

DAVE: At one point you were writing for the Encyclopedia Britannica?

MIKE: Yes. I was working as a writer/editor for the Britannica in 1968, when I quit to begin work on the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes*

DAVE: What particularly did you do with Britannica? What did your work for them entail?

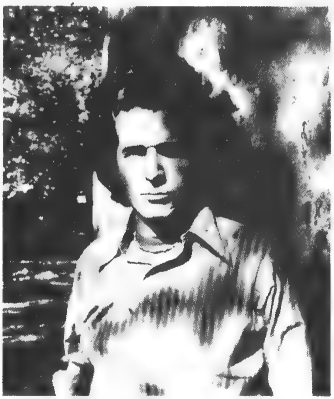
MIKE: Well, the Britannica at that time was engaged in compiling a version of its encyclopedia to be sold in Japan. And so I was writing articles for this edition that would later be translated into Japanese and marketed in the Far East.

DAVE: So you don't speak Japanese?

MIKE: No.

DAVE: Do you speak any foreign language?

MIKE: Some French.



DAVE: From high school?

MIKE: From high school and college. But anyway, my work for the Britannica was done in English, not Japanese.

DAVE: If it was going to be translated into Japanese later, what was the difference between that model and the basic one?

MIKE: The conventional Encyclopaedia Britannica is weighted towards American and European interests. There's much more emphasis on European authors, for example, than on Oriental ones. The Japanese Britannica placed a much heavier emphasis on various subjects of interest to Orientals.

DAVE: When you first got the idea for your comic book encyclopedia, how did it come about?

MIKE: While I was at the Britannica, someone at the office composed a short biography of Clark Kent as though Kent were a real person, as though his biography was going to appear in the Britannica. Biographies in the Britannica are characterized by a certain distinctive, pseudoscholarly style. And this person wrote this short piece on Clark Kent and passed it around the office as a sort of joke. That piece gave me the idea for the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes*.

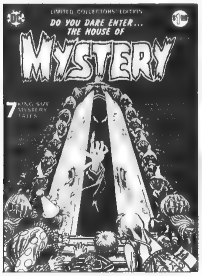
DAVE: Now, did you take that idea and go to a publisher or . . . did someone hear of your idea and contact you?

MIKE: I went home that night and I had a copy of Jules Feiffer's book, *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, which had been published by the Dial Press around 1964. I used the Golden Age comic book stories reprinted in it as source material for half a dozen short encyclopedia-style articles. Then I took my articles, along with a proposal, to the Dial Press. I proposed my *Encyclopedia* and sold it practically the same day.

DAVE: That's rather rare, isn't it?

MIKE: Yes, it is.

DAVE: Did you speak to several editors there?



MIKE: Well, no, I went to one editor and I showed him my proposal just before lunchtime and he said, "Well, this looks interesting. You'll probably have to do some more writing on it to show us what it would be like, but I'll show it around the office." And at four o'clock in the afternoon he called me up on the phone and said, "Everybody down here just loves it and we want it." [Laughter]

DAVE: Was it a young editorial staff, or did they like the idea strictly for commercial purposes?

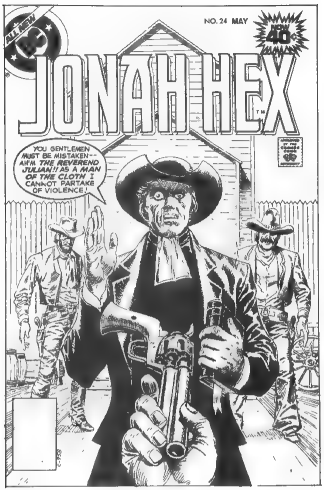
MIKE: I think they liked the idea and they also felt it would be commercial.

DAVE: Has it done well?

MIKE: Yes, it has. Each volume has sold about 30,000 copies, which isn't at all bad.

DAVE: But it didn't eventually get published by Dial.

MIKE: No it didn't. That's a long, long story. When I originally had the idea for the *Encyclopedia* I really had no idea what a mammoth project it would become. And there came a point at which the *Encyclopedia* was becoming so large that Dial insisted that I cut back the length of it. And I refused.


NO. 24 MAY
40 BIG PAGES
JONAH HEX
YOU GENTLEMEN MUST BE MISTAKEN— AM I'M THE REVEREND JULIAN! I AS A MAN OF THE CLOTH I CANNOT PARTAKE OF VIOLENCE!

DAVE: At that point, was it still envisioned as a single volume?

MIKE: It was envisioned as either a single volume or as two volumes in a slipcase. And, it was just becoming mammoth. Dial said, "Look, either you cut it back to a size that we can produce for about $10.95, or we're just not going to publish it." And I decided that I wanted to go ahead with the full project, so I just severed my ties with them. And so for several of the years that I worked on the project, I had no publisher for it at all.

DAVE: How did you support yourself during that time?

MIKE: Mainly through writing comic book stories.

DAVE: Had you ever written any comic book stories prior to this need?

MIKE: No. What happened was that I got this idea for the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes* and I sold it to a publisher and then I contacted the big comic companies and I asked for permission to examine their files of back issues. And I started spending every working day at DC Comics, and then at Marvel Comics and other places, reading old comic books and taking exhaustive notes on them. I never in my wildest dreams had the idea of writing a comic book story. But I was meeting the people in the comic book business and becoming friendly with them. You know, I'd have lunch with them, and take coffee breaks with them and . . . after all, I was there for years! I worked on the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes* for seven years! So, you know, I began to have more seniority than many of the employees. [Laughter] So, when my *Encyclopedia* advance ran out and I needed money, I asked Joe Orlando if I could try writing comic book stories for DC.

DAVE: What was the first piece you did, do you remember?

MIKE: I do. The first piece I wrote was really not my own. I dialogued a story that had already been drawn. It was an eight-page story entitled "Generation Gap" about a shipwrecked sailor, I think, who visits an island inhabited by beautiful women who stay young forever. It wasn't a very good story, but it was my first job. And then I did some . . .

DAVE: What was Joe at that time?

MIKE: He was the editor in charge of most of the mystery magazines. So, I asked him if he would let me try my hand at writing some mystery stories, and he said, "Sure."

DAVE: Was this free-lance or did he take you on staff?

MIKE: Strictly free-lance.

DAVE: Which magazine did that appear in, do you remember?

MIKE: Yes, it appeared long after I wrote it, in *Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion* #11. It wasn't a very good story. Then I wrote a few Gothic romances. When I really started doing my own stories in earnest they were stories that were published in *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets* and the other DC mystery magazine. In all, I wrote nearly 200 mystery stories.

DAVE: Do you recall which was the very first story of your own published by DC?

copyrighted by D.C. Comics. 1980

MIKE: I'm sorry, I don't. It was certainly one of those Gothic romances.

DAVE: When you first started working in comics, did you have a preconception of what a comic book writer's life was all about?

MIKE: Well, to be completely frank, when I started writing comic books I was still primarily involved in the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes*. And that was what I was mainly interested in. Even after I severed my relationship with the Dial Press, I had a very strong commitment to my encyclopedia project. I needed some way to pick up some extra money. Writing comic books just happened to be handy. If something else had been handy I would have done that. I never imagined that I was going to continue it for a very long time. But then I became very involved in it.

DAVE: You enjoyed it?

MIKE: Yes, a lot.

DAVE: What did you do after you started to click with your mystery stories at DC? Did they then take you on staff or did you always work free-lance?

MIKE: I've always worked free-lance. The only minor exception to that is that DC allowed me to cull illustrations from its back issues to illustrate my *Encyclopedia*. They also allowed me use of their darkroom facilities, so long as I reimbursed them for the materials I used; the paper and film and so on. When I had finished doing this work, which involved thousands of illustrations, they presented me with a bill for the materials I had used. And I asked if I could please work off this bill instead of paying it off in cash. So for a short time I worked as an assistant to Joe Orlando—as an assistant editor to Joe Orlando—long enough for me to pay off that bill, and I think I may even have worked for Joe for a month or two beyond that. But even then, I was never a full-time employee. I worked a certain number of hours per week for Joe Orlando, but that only lasted a few months.

DAVE: During the period when you didn't have a publisher —Warner Communications owns DC—did you ever think of putting the two together and going to Warner Books?

MIKE: I never did.

DAVE: Any particular reason or you just didn't think of it?

MIKE: I don't know. I just didn't think of it. No one suggested it and I never thought of it.

DAVE: DC never suggested it?

MIKE: No.

DAVE: Interesting. When you were at DC, which strip that you worked on in any regular fashion was the most successful?

MIKE: Well, as I've already said, I've written a great many mystery stories, several hundred of them. And I believe the first series that I started working on was *Jonah Hex*, which I

copyrighted by D.C. Comics.1980

started writing in 1972.

DAVE: Did you originate the character?

MIKE: No I didn't. Jonah Hex was created by John Albano, a very creative, very gifted writer who wrote eight or nine Jonah Hex stories. And then, Arnold Drake wrote one. And then I've written all the rest, with the exception of three that were written by David Michelinie in 1977.

DAVE: Do you find it's to your professional benefit to be so closely associated with the strip?

MIKE: I don't understand the question

DAVE: When people think of *Jonah Hex*, people think of you as the *Jonah Hex* writer. Do you feel that's a positive thing?

MIKE: I like being associated with it because I'm very, very fond of the strip. It's a very offbeat strip. It's not the kind of fare fans mostly like, but over the years it's built up a very loyal hardcore audience. I enjoy it because I identify with the strip very closely and it allows me to do a lot of very unconventional things.

DAVE: Is that also your favorite strip or is there another one that you like?

MIKE: *Jonah Hex* is my favorite strip.

DAVE: When you started working on the Spectre series in *Adventure*—that was issues 431 to 440—I understand you started to get—not you personally but just in general, the strip—some harsh reaction. Some people thought it was a bit bizarre or dangerous for young minds to be reading?

MIKE: Well, I don't know exactly what they thought, you'd have to ask them. But there was a certain amount of hostile reaction to the strip, yes.

DAVE: Basically, from what areas, parents or educators . . . ?

MIKE: Oh no, nothing like that. It was just from fans at conventions.

DAVE: The fans didn't appreciate it?

MIKE: Some did, some didn't. And then there were a few people inside the industry who were scandalized.

DAVE: They were afraid it was the second coming of E.C.?

MIKE: I think they were afraid it was the first coming of the Anti-Christ! [laughter]

DAVE: You should have shifted to Marvel then. Marvel loves to do Christ and Anti-Christ themes.

MIKE: There were a few silly people who were running around saying things like, "Michael Fleisher is going to bring about the destruction of the comic book industry," and stuff like that. It was very funny. [laughter]

DAVE: Is that why the series ended, with 440, or did it terminate naturally?

MIKE: No, no, it ended with 440—actually there are two scripts that were written and never published, which I hope someday will be published—but the reason that it ended was simply because the series failed to attract a large enough audience.

DAVE: *Adventure*, during that period, had a lot of trouble with sales no matter who the character was, didn't it?

MIKE: That's right, that's true. The Spectre looked as though it was going to do well for a while, but it simply didn't sustain the sales necessary for its continuation.

DAVE: Prior to working on the Spectre series, did you do much back research on the old 1940s and 1960s stories?

MIKE: Well, I had read all the previous Spectres from my work on the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes*. I had read all the Spectre stories in *More Fun Comics* and I had read the 10-issue revival edited by Julie Schwartz. My Spectre really harkened back to the 1940s Spectre and ignored the more modern revival.

DAVE: Did you see the Spectre as having had two periods prior to you, or can you break it down a little more, in terms of the characters development?

MIKE: Well, I found that when I did my research on my *Encyclopedia*—and I read so many comics for that—that I tended to like the first year or two of most series. Superman and Batman included, best of all. The early period, the early periods of all the characters, tended to be the most vital and the most interesting for me. After a while, a certain safeness and familiarity would always seem to set in. I always found it very funny that the same fans who claim to worship the Golden Age would often turn white and start clutching their chests when they would see the Spectre, because all I really

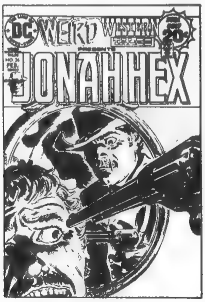
copyrighted by D.C. Comics. 1980

The SPECTRE!

did was try to re-create the sort of bloodcurdling atmosphere of the early Spectre stories that had run in *More Fun Comics*. In fact, you know, one of the things that distinguishes that series, the series I did, is the novel ways in which the Spectre kills the bad guys. Yet some of those methods were really stolen straight from *More Fun Comics*. However, I do like to think I added a little something extra to it all. [laughter]

DAVE: Several years ago, Cary Burkett, in issue #16 of *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, wrote an article in which he tried to pull together all the various stories on the Spectre which seemed to conflict. He tried to put them all together into one solid story so someone could say, "This is the Spectre. This is how he developed, this is how he progressed." In his run in *More Fun Comics*, and his 10-issue run of *The Spectre*, the adventures of the Spectre had always taken place on Earth-Two. Burkett, in this article, came up with the theory that the adventures of the Spectre which you chronicled were taking place on Earth-One. Do you find any validity in this theory?

MIKE: I just have to tell you that Earth-One and Earth-Two totally confuses me and I don't like them. And, I can't really comment on that because I never think about that stuff. There was a time when DC needed a character for *Adventure Comics*, there were a number of possible candidates, and I had read the Spectre. I was very excited about the prospect of reviving it. I ignored the old continuity in which I wasn't interested. I kept what I wanted and dropped what I didn't. I added stuff of my own. I never tried to fit it into the "DC universe" in a rational way. I just tried to write good, scary stories. I'm very proud of those stories.



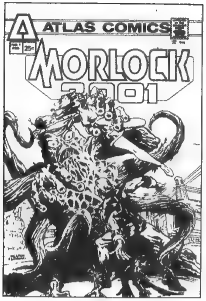
DAVE: You have no control over the art, but Jim Aparo, in the later stories you wrote, was drawing a reporter who was following the Spectre, who for some strange reason was the spit 'n' image of Clark Kent. Was that deliberate or not? And if it was, was it your idea?

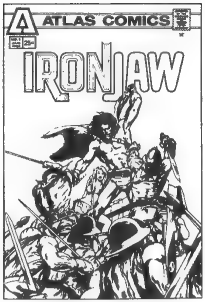
MIKE: It was not deliberate as far as I know, and it was not my idea.

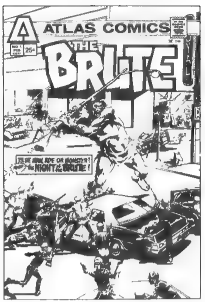
DAVE: Before I just said that, were you even aware of it? No one had commented to you that he looked just like Clark Kent?

MIKE: No, but it often happens—by the way, I think the artwork that Jim Aparo did on the strip was extraordinary—but, you know, it often happens that an artist will have a certain heroine type, or hero type, or certain types for other roles and they'll often appear and reappear in his work. We needed a handsome, vigorous young man to play the reporter, but we didn't want someone who looked like Jim Corrigan, so we made him a bespectacled journalist type. The similarity to Clark Kent was not intentional. There is one story in which Jim Corrigan facetiously refers to that reporter as Clark Kent, but that was kind of a joke.

DAVE: Yes, that made us wonder, though, because up until that particular story people were saying, "This must be a takeoff. It really looks like Clark Kent." Then after you made that comment, we were really wondering if you guys . . .







MIKE: I think, maybe, those who felt that way were reading more into it than we ever intended.

DAVE: Was there ever a particular series that you did because you thought it was good at first, or because you had to do it, but it turned out you didn't like it or it wasn't moving the way you thought it would?

MIKE: I don't think so. There certainly have been series that have been hard to write, but I can't think of a series that ever didn't meet my expectations in that way, no.

DAVE: Since, with the possible exception of your position as assistant editor to Joe Orlando, since you never worked for DC, so to speak, but were free-lancing, you never actually left DC. How did you start to branch out into other publishing firms? Did they approach you, or did you go to them and say, "Hey, I'm a pro, I worked for DC. Can I work for you?"

MIKE: Well, the first time I worked for a company other than DC was during the Atlas period.

DAVE: Larry Lieber was the publisher, right?

MIKE: I'm not sure exactly what his title was. I don't really know. I think Martin and Chip Goodman were the owners of the company, and Jeff Rovin was the head editor, although I don't know what his title was either. I'm not sure what Larry Lieber's title was. But I went to them and asked them for work, and they gave it to me.

DAVE: It was just rumored on the streets that they were putting together a company that needed writers?

MIKE: Well, you know, it's a small industry, this kind of thing gets around. I guess that was 1974. And then in 1978, there was a big work cutback at DC, and I just found myself not able to get enough work at DC, so I went to Marvel. I went to them.

DAVE: Again, for just free-lance?

MIKE: Yes. I went to them and I asked them if they had any work I could do.

DAVE: At Atlas, how many titles did you do?

MIKE: Oh, four or five. *The Grim Ghost* was one, *The Tarantula* was another. *Morlock, 2001*, *The Brute*, and *Ironjaw*. Five.

DAVE: Did you create all these yourself or were the ideas given to you to develop?

MIKE: I created all of them but the *Brute*. *Morlock, 2001*, I created with *Allen Milgrom*.

DAVE: What was the first strip you did at Marvel?

MIKE: Well, first I did some fill-ins at Marvel. I wrote a *Daredevil*. I wrote . . .

DAVE: Would you happen to recall which issue?

MIKE: I don't. It was held onto a long time before it finally came out. It was only meant to be used if the regular writer or artist fell behind schedule or something like that. My first regular series was the *Ghost Rider*, which I still write.

DAVE: The *Ghost Rider* tended to go more to a Spectre type of series after you took it over.

MIKE: It's gotten meaner.

DAVE: Yeah. Did they say, "Hey, do a Spectre job on him," or is this just the way you like to work with the mystical characters?

MIKE: I just like mean guys. [laughter]

DAVE: Okay. Any flack with that like you had with Spectre, about having all these ghoulish characters . . . ?

MIKE: No, I think people now are pretty much adjusted to the fact that wherever I go there are ghoulish characters. And of course the Ghost Rider is not nearly as mean as the Spectre.

DAVE: You didn't have any really ghoulish ones at Atlas, did you?

MIKE: Oh, I wouldn't say that. We had the Tarantula, a man who carried the curse of periodically turning into a spider and devouring people

DAVE: But he didn't relish that really, did he? All your other characters relish it.

MIKE: No, he felt some remorse. That's true, I may have slipped up there [laughter]. And the Grim Ghost flew through the air on a flying horse and killed criminals for Satan. And Ironjaw was a fairly bloodthirsty barbarian. I would say that I

ran pretty true to form at Atlas.

DAVE: When Atlas was set up, many of the titles seemed very similar to other titles already running in the "majors." Was there a concept—"Okay, what kind of character do you want?" A Hulk character? Do you want a Conan character?"—of trying to hit all the bases and that's how you got the group?

MIKE: I really don't know the answer to that. Because I really have nothing to do with the business side of comics or the marketing side of comics. I just write the stories. What the views of the management were, I don't know. I certainly don't think they set out to copy anybody else's characters, but . . .

DAVE: No, they were different. I didn't mean they were rip-offs, I just meant . . .

MIKE: Well, I'm sure Atlas wanted some super-heroes, and some mystery-style material, and so on, so that they could put out various kinds of material and see what would sell.

DAVE: Jack Harris commented in a fanzine a little while back that there are now three types of people working for comics. There's the artist and the writer who grew up as a fan and is now doing it because he wants to see the comics continue on that path. He reads comics daily and is really into it. There's the professional who's doing it as a job and if the comic company burned down tomorrow he really wouldn't care as long as he could get another job. And there's the guy somewhere in between who is into the work, but he's into it as a professional and was not necessarily a real rabid fan when he was growing up. Where would you place yourself?

MIKE: Well, I would say that I'm a professional writer and that I like writing comics very much. I would be very unhappy if it was not possible to write comics anymore. But I'm writing comics because it's an enjoyable way to make a livelihood. I'm not a rabid fan. I was an avid comic book reader from about age seven to about age 14. But I did not look at a comic book from the time I was 14 until the time I was 26 and began work on the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes*.

DAVE: Did you even read *Wonder Woman*?

MIKE: I did read some *Wonder Woman* as a boy, yes.

DAVE: Whenever you write about yourself you seem to write a little bit tongue-in-cheek. Is there any particular reason for that?

MIKE: When do I write about myself?

DAVE: Well, in your opening for your *Encyclopedia*, for example. You also put out an ad in the *Amazing World of DC Comics*. I don't know if this was meant to be an ad or just came out looking like an ad.

MIKE: Oh, yes, I remember that.

DAVE: *The Amazing World of DC Comics*, #13.

MIKE: I think I remember that, that piece about my Wonder Woman book. That wasn't meant to be an ad. They asked me to do a little piece on . . .

DAVE: Right. But in issue 12 you put out a little piece about your encyclopedia series called "Confessions Of An Over-Age Comic Book Fanatic."

MIKE: Where did you dig that up?

DAVE: The following issue, in 13, that's when editors of *Amazing World* said, "Hey, here's a sample of the *Encyclopedia* we referred to in 12. Was that an ad or was that actually a contribution in itself?

MIKE: It was a contribution. I suppose if it served to focus some attention on the *Encyclopedia*, it might have had some advertising benefit. But it was intended as a piece that might be of interest to readers of *Amazing World*.

DAVE: Back to that concept. You tend to write about yourself a bit tongue-in-cheek. Is that a style in itself that you deliberately go for, or is that your way of shielding the real you from the public.

MIKE: Well, I don't know. I think when I would look back at the *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes* it always had several qualities for me. But one of them was that it seemed like a completely crazy thing to do. You know, I sat, I spent seven years of my life locked up in either the DC library or over at Marvel or at Will Eisner's studio reading. I would guess I was able to read about three comic books a day taking extensive notes on them. I read thousands of comic books. The *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes* is something like 2 million words long, so it seems funny in a certain kind of way. I mean, it was hard work and I'm very proud of it and I'm very happy with the results. But sometimes I like to laugh at it a little.

DAVE: You published a novel called *Chasing Hairy*. I see you smiling already. You're anticipating this.

MIKE: I am.

DAVE: Is it still on the stands. Is there a way that this interview can double your sales?

MIKE: I don't know. *Chasing Hairy* is probably available in larger bookstores. It's certainly available from the publisher, St. Martin's Press, or from the Super Snipe comic book shop, 1617 Second Avenue, in New York City.

DAVE: When you were a child, did you ever dream of being a writer someday?

MIKE: Oh yes. That's all I ever wanted to be.

DAVE: Was there an influence when you were younger, a friend or a relative who was a teacher or something?

MIKE: Well, my father is a college professor. An English Professor.

DAVE: Which college?

MIKE: My father was, until he retired, the Chairman of the Department of English and Fine Arts at Yeshiva University and he always encouraged my writing.

DAVE: Did you ever dream of a specific, like the Great American Novel, or just that you wanted to be a writer?

MIKE: Well, I always wanted to be a novelist.

DAVE: You didn't care for non-fiction.

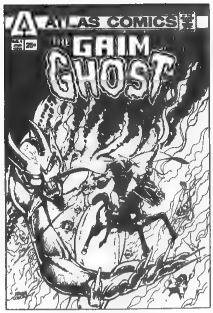
MIKE: Not very much, no. To write novels as excellently as I possibly can really remains my chief ambition.

DAVE: I understand you sold an exceptional number of copies of *Chasing Hairy*?

MIKE: Not really, although we did sell more than average. The average sale of a first novel in hardcover is 1,250 copies. *Chasing Hairy* has sold roughly three times that, between 3,500 and 4,000 copies.

DAVE: I assume your editors are pleased then.

copyrighted by D.C. Comics,1980



MIKE: Well, they're happy. It's a good first effort. It's very hard to sell a first novel. Not many people are willing to walk into a bookstore and plunk down $10 for a book by a writer they've never heard of. So it's very hard. It's a difficult struggle.

DAVE: How did you go about selling the concept? Did you have a complete manuscript?

MIKE: Yes, I had a complete manuscript.

DAVE: And you just walked the streets with it?

MIKE: Well, the editor who published my *Batman* and *Wonder Woman* volumes at Macmillian had in the interim migrated to St. Martins Press. I took my novel to him and he bought it.

DAVE: So he was the first one you approached then.

MIKE: Yes.

DAVE: You have a very good record then. You have two projects and each one sold to the first publisher.

MIKE: Yes, that's true.

DAVE: Have you ever taken anything else for sale at this point?

MIKE: Well, I've had, over the years, ideas for books for which I've written proposals that have either been rejected or I haven't been able to get enough money for them, that I've therefore never done. A number of years ago I did a proposal, of which I still remain very proud, of a scholarly biography of Jesse James. I had two publishers offer to buy it, but the advances just wouldn't have covered the very elaborate research that was required, and reluctantly I put that book aside, till maybe one day I could afford to do it.

DAVE: That's non-fiction. What happened?

MIKE: Well, I think that's my point. If I write a novel, I don't really care if I don't make any money at it. But if I do something else, I just have to be paid for it. The *Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes* was not a very lucrative way to spend seven years, but it did pay me a reasonable salary for the time that I spent working on it. My novel certainly has not done that.

DAVE: How long did it take you to write *Chasing Hairy*?

MIKE: It took me nine months, divided over a three-year period. That is, it took three years, but during that three years I invested an average of 90 days a year.

DAVE: On the flyleaf, your publisher wrote: "Chasing Hairy is a brutal, profoundly disturbing portrait of two young men who meet as college students and develop a close, complex friendship whose underlying basis is the shared but unconscious hostility they bear towards women." Was this supposed to be taken at face value, or, as most readers have found, does it contain dozens of hidden meanings and messages scattered throughout?

MIKE: I don't understand the question.

DAVE: Was the story to be taken at face value, as a story, to enjoy the characters and then close the book, or were you trying to have messages in it for the readers to go, "Aha!" and get something out of it rather than just enjoying the book?

MIKE: Clearly there are themes involved in *Chasing Hairy* that go well beyond the superficial.

DAVE: Anything you'd like to go into? Any philosophies that you're expressing, beyond the obvious fact that the two characters are not exactly supporters of the E.R.A.

MIKE: No, they're certainly not. [laughter]. At the risk of seeming coy, I think I'll say that it's probably better for people to read the book—if they're interested enough in my work to read it—than to have me say twenty or thirty well-chosen words about what the big message is supposed to be. I don't think shorthand messages are what a novel's about. I think we should steer clear of that.

DAVE: You used a particular writing style in *Chasing Hairy* that is not particularly traditional. And I understand that caused you some mix-ups when you handed in the manuscript.

MIKE: Oh yes, it was very funny. The book, as you and I have discussed before this, is told in the first person by one of the novel's two protagonists. And it's told in a kind of talkative, personal style. It has long, run-on sentences that are heavily punctuated by commas. And when the manuscript was handed over to a copy editor by the publisher—that is, a person charged with correcting typographical errors and preparing the manuscript for the printer—this person chose to change all those commas into periods, so that the book was turned into a novel consisting almost entirely of three- and four-word sentences. It was completely ridiculous. I had to erase all those corrections and do the entire copy-editing job myself to ensure that the original style would remain.

DAVE: How did you decide upon this style? There were sometimes as many as three pages running before you'd get to a period. The whole book had a feel to it as if someone were standing next to you, out of breath, relating what just happened before they had run around the corner to you.

MIKE: Thank you very much.

DAVE: And the dialogue was real in the sense that without

putting in gratuitous profanity, which would have made it sound artificial and strained, you managed to have it sound like a real person speaking.

MIKE: Even before I began, I gave all these questions a great deal of thought. That is, forgetting for a moment questions of plot and incident, I thought about, well, how should this story be told and who should be telling it, and I decided that I wanted this story to be told by one of the characters instead of in the third person, because my goal was to break down, as much as possible, the distance between the reader and the events described. In other words, if a story is told by an omniscient observer, that tends to enable the reader to separate himself from the content and to feel superior to the characters. He watches the events taking place as if he were watching bugs crawling around under a microscope. So I wanted to get my reader very much involved in the story. And in order to do that, I decided that what I needed was for one of the characters to tell it directly.

DAVE: Do you foresee this as your style in future novels or was it just right for that particular novel?

MIKE: That's a very good question. I don't think I'll use that style again for quite some time. In that sense it was just a style that seemed ideal for that specific novel. But I can see myself writing two or three more novels about those same people, because I'm very involved with those people. I think I would let a lot of time and a couple of books pass before I try it, but I think eventually I will.

DAVE: So if we wait long enough, we'll maybe see a sequel. Do you have anything to say about it?

MIKE: Well, I have *everything* to say about it. At least I have everything to say about whether it gets written. But a sequel, I don't know. That suggests something too precisely connected. But I think you'll eventually see another novel about those same people, yes.

DAVE: You're working on another novel now, aren't you?

MIKE: I am. But I won't talk about the content of it.

DAVE: Will St. Martin's Press be publishing it?

MIKE: St. Martin's has an option on my next book, so I hope so.

DAVE: Is that very friendly editor still working at St. Martin's?

MIKE: Yes, he is. *Chasing Hairy* is a disturbing book which has made a lot of people very angry. And my editor at St. Martin's deserves a great deal of credit for the courage that he has shown in publishing it.

DAVE: Want to give him a plug?

MIKE: Well, his name is Michael Denneny and he has shown great courage in publishing it, and great faith generally in my work.

DAVE: If the novel writing business ever became financially successful for you, would you ever leave comics?

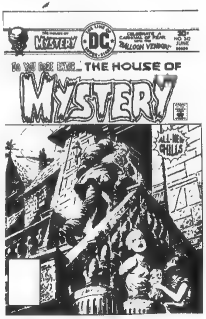
MIKE: Yes, I would. I would leave comics if it were possible for me to make a living writing my own fiction. My principal ambition, after all, is really to write novels. But, in my case, commercial novel-writing success is not really a very realistic expectation. I'm not really a commercial writer. Even in comics—although I assume that the comics I write are commercial enough to appeal to a large enough audience for them to be commercially viable—I'm not really a commercial kind of writer. Even in comics, what I do is largely offbeat. I'm never likely to be a writer of best-selling novels. I'm not saying that in an arrogant way. I'm just not a person who has a very commercial imagination and I'm not likely to write best-sellers. If my novels ever sell large numbers of copies, it will probably be many years from now, after I've hopefully established some sort of reputation.

DAVE: I must be very bizarre, because I love all your work.

MIKE: Well, thank you very much. That's what makes a writer's life worthwhile. You have no idea how grateful I am.

DAVE: Do you consider well done comic books, as opposed to something just shoved off, as being a legitimate art form both in the art and in writing?

MIKE: That's a very good question. I'll try to answer it as



best I can. There's no reason why comics couldn't be artistic. In other words, there's no law that says just because something has pictures and word balloons it can't be fine art. But comics—and right now I'm talking about commercial, above-ground comics—are not fine art. They're escapist entertainment. Those of us who are in the comic book business are engaged in making escapist entertainment. There can be high-quality escapist entertainment and crummy escapist entertainment.

DAVE: Would you consider "Jaws" escapist entertainment rather than art?

MIKE: Absolutely! "Jaws" was top-notch escapist entertainment.

DAVE: Is escapist entertainment, by your definition, whatever it may be, a level in itself, or is it just a category so that escapist entertainment can't be art?

MIKE: Well, let's talk about comics specifically. I'm certainly not saying that just because something is exciting it can't be excellent or it can't be art. But in commercial comics, first of all, we write about highly idealized people. They're not real people at all. There are whole areas of subject matter that we're forbidden to write about at all. We rarely write about ideas. Mainly, we write about fistfights.

copyrighted by D.C. Comics, 1980

DAVE: Even the Silver Surfer?

MIKE: I don't share fandom's passion for the Surfer. So, while there are some comics, many comics, that are beautifully done—I loved comics when I was a kid and I try my best to write good comics now, and I value the work that's done by others that's excellent—I don't think comics either deal with the real world without, or come to grips, in an honest way, with the emotional world within, in the way, say, that great literature does. I don't think that the important things in life, whether it's love or death or sorrow or parting, have been dealt with as beautifully in comics as they have been dealt with in the world's great novels.

DAVE: Have you ever had any problems with the Comic Book Code?

MIKE: I don't think I've had more, well, let me take that back . . .

DAVE: I don't want to be personal and get the Code after you. I just mean, as a writer in general, does it interfere much, in your creativity? Since you say you're limited as to what you can go into . . .

MIKE: Well, the sad thing about the Code and its effects is that after awhile, those of us who work in comics tend to learn what the limitations are and to resign ourselves to them. That's too bad in a way, because it's probably better to be fresh, and eager, and to break as many rules as you can. Then let the Code slap you down if they want to.

DAVE: So you think the writers become self-censors.

MIKE: Yes. I'm afraid that becomes unavoidable. I try very hard to get away with as much as I possibly can, but of course the existence of the Code hampers one's creativity. Not in the sense that you come up with a wonderful idea and you're not allowed to do it. It hampers your creativity in the sense that you avoid having the kinds of ideas that the Code won't let you do. And that's too bad. The underground comics are really much stronger in this area. They have a much greater claim, in my judgement, to real innovation and accomplishment because they allow themselves a great deal more freedom and vitality.

DAVE: Having in a sense, studied comics over the decades in your research for your *Encyclopedia*, is there one particular period that you would say is superior to the rest, in terms of what it accomplished?

MIKE: There was a comment that Robert Crumb once made, which I'll have to paraphrase because I don't remember it exactly. Robert Crumb said that the first year of the old Golden Age series are always great, and then after that it's all downhill. I tend to agree with that. I think if you look at the earliest issues of a comic, they frequently contain a vitality and an excitement and a willingness to explore that are frequently lost when the series becomes more established. So I would say that my own favorites tend to be the early issues. I think *Batman* #1 is a simply fabulous comic. Now, I'm sure that the people who write *Batman* now—I mean there are some beautiful, beautiful modern *Batman* stories by Denny O'Neil and Steve Englehart and other fine writers—who are probably better writers than many of the people who wrote *Batman* in the '40s. But I don't know if any *Batman* comic is really more exciting, in retrospect, than *Batman* #1. Whether our comics, the comics we're writing now, will have that kind of raw, vivid appeal to people thirty years from now, it's really very hard to say.

DAVE: Do you find that working with different companies —you've worked with four now—Atlas, Warren, DC and Marvel—that there are any different pressures, systems or styles that you have to adjust to?

MIKE: Well, the companies certainly have their special personalities and styles. I think the principal difference between DC and Marvel is the whole way in which a comic is produced. There are two basic techniques. Neither is really exclusive with any one company, but there is a style that tends to be used more at Marvel, much more at Marvel, and a different style that tends to be used much more at DC. At DC, a writer prepares a full script and the artist takes that script and he illustrates it. At Marvel they use a style which is called the "Marvel style," in which the writer produces a short synopsis of the story, and the artist takes the synopsis and draws the entire story from the synopsis. Then the writer goes back and writes the dialogue to fill in the balloons. The Marvel style allows much more control to the artist, and the DC style tends to give more control to the writer. I think generally, although it's dangerous to generalize, that the Marvel technique tends to produce stories that are more exciting visually, while the DC technique tends to produce better stories in the conventional sense of what a better story is.

DAVE: Someone once said—and it's a fairly recent comment—that if you ask a Marvel person what he does for a living he will say he makes comic books. If you ask a DC person what he does for a living, he will say he's in publishing. Do you find that true?

MIKE: No. The people at DC and the people at Marvel are, to a very great extent, the same people. When we really talk about people who work for DC or people who work for Marvel, we're talking, after all, mainly about free-lancers. Comics is a business of free-lancers.

DAVE: I was thinking more towards the editorial staffs that are always with the company.

MIKE: Even there, there are several editors at Marvel who were once editors at DC.

DAVE: Archie Goodwin.

MIKE: Archie Goodwin was an editor at DC. And Allen Milgrom was an editor at DC. And Larry Hama was an editor at DC. You know, there's really a great deal of movement back and forth between the two companies. I think it would be correct to say that the companies have different atmospheres and different personalities, but I think the DC people are every bit as much involved in comics and have a very great personal love for comics.

DAVE: If you had the opportunity, would you be interested in writing for the movies?

MIKE: Yes, I would, but it's not a very great ambition of mine. That is, for me it would be like a chance to take a trip on a sailboat. You know, it's something that I'd really like to do. It would be a whole lot of fun. But if I died without ever having done either of those things, I could still be very happy. It would be exciting to write a movie, but it's not a great ambition of mine.

DAVE: Does this in any way reflect your opinion that writing a motion-picture script is not exactly on the same level as writing a novel?

MIKE: Well, no, I think it just reflects my personal involvement with prose fiction. You know, it's not my ambition to be a painter, either. That doesn't mean I think what Picasso did isn't as important as writing. It's just that writing novels happens to be my strong ambition and writing movies isn't.

DAVE: You said that in the "Marvel style" more emphasis is placed on the art, and in the "traditional style"—is that what you referred to it as . . . ?

MIKE: The DC style.

DAVE: Is there a name for it?

MIKE: We could call it the DC style.

DAVE: The DC style places more emphasis on the writer. Do you . . .

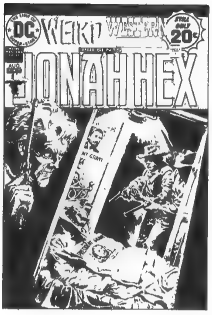
MIKE: Actually, in the industry, the DC method is often referred to as the "full script" technique, and then the Marvel method is called the Marvel style.

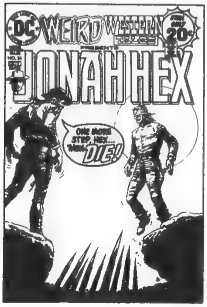
DAVE: Okay, full script. Bearing in mind that there may be some prejudice being that you are a writer, which do you think is more important to the success of a running title?

MIKE: Well, that's a really good question but I'm not going to be able to give you a good answer. Because I have no idea what contributes to the success of a long-running title. After all, there are successful series which are done full script and there are successful series which are done Marvel style. Therefore, neither style really determines the success or failure of a series.

DAVE: Not so much the style used, but let's say you have a really dynamite script that's given to a poor artist. Or you have a weak script that's given to someone like Adams or Starlin, or Steranko. Can either of them succeed because of the strength of one of the two parts, or do you need both?

MIKE: Well, let's not talk about commercial success, because only God knows what produces commercial success. But to produce what you and I might consider a great story, you need a great artist working with a great writer. And to the extent that you lack one of those two things, the quality of the story is going to be diminished. But a great artist can often do





wonders with a mediocre story, and a great script can often shine through mediocre art. But certainly it's best to have both. It's best to have an excellent artist and an excellent writer and, in the Marvel particularly, I think, it's best to have an artist and writer who have a close rapport. Because you can have an excellent artist and an excellent writer who think dissimilarly, and that will tend not to produce very excellent stories.

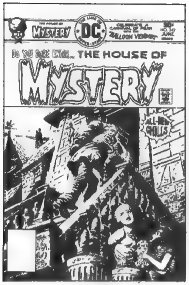
DAVE: If you're using the Marvel style, and you're getting back some pencil work that does not convey what you're trying to express in your concept, are you stuck with it? Does the comic book come out that way, or can you get the artist to rework it?

MIKE Well, it's possible to request changes, provided the changes are reasonable—and changes are frequently made—but it's not possible to change the nature of a whole man's work. It does sometimes happen that your story is drawn by someone who is not ideally suited to that particular story. But, you know, that's life.

DAVE: You have a reputation in the industry for being marvelous when it comes to deadlines. Usually if they have four stories to worry about, they worry about only three because they know yours is going to come in on time. Is it something that's appreciated or is it that rare?

MIKE: A lot of people are late. [laughter] I don't know what else to say about that. I pride myself on meeting deadlines. I think it's important and I think it's a sign of being professional. If I were running a company, I wouldn't be patient with people who were chronically late.

DAVE: Do you read comics now?



MIKE: Yes. But I don't read everything that comes out.

DAVE: What are your favorites?

MIKE: I like David Michelinie's *Iron Man* series very much. I like Roger McKenzie and Frank Miller's *Daredevil* very much. I think those are two of the series I admire most. I do a lot of reading outside comics, and so I tend to read comics that people tell me are excellent, or series that I need to read as background for my own comic book work. If I'm going to write even a fill-in issue of let's say *Daredevil*, I have to read a bunch of the previous issues to acquaint myself with what's going on. There are a lot of things I haven't read, I'm sure, that are excellent. For example, I only recently read the fabulous *Batman* stories by Terry Austin and Marshal Rogers and Steve Englehart which came out a couple of years ago, because I was going to do a *Batman* story and I needed to read those as background material. They were fabulous stories, I'm glad I read them, but I didn't read them at the time they came out.

DAVE: Are you still going to do the *Batman* story?

MIKE: I've just finished doing a couple of *Batman* stories that should be out soon.

DAVE: Does he chop someone's head off?

MIKE: No, no. Batman has his limitations. [laughter]

DAVE: In comic books or in novels, do you have some ideal or model that you try to follow consciously or subconsciously?

MIKE: Well, there are many writers whom I like, but I don't write like them. I'm really a great admirer of William Faulkner, and of Samuel Beckett. But I don't write like those men. Although I would like to say, that—I don't know if your readers are familiar with the novels of Samuel Beckett, who wrote the play *Waiting for Godot*. He's a very avant garde sort of writer—the idea of the long run-on sentences punctuated by commas is really an idea that I first learned from Beckett. Now, no one reading my work and his would call our work similar, because his work is very abstruse and intellectual and my work is violent and realistic. But I'm a great admirer of his work and I know his style has influenced mine.

DAVE: Are there any artists whom you particularly enjoy working with?

MIKE: Oh, there are many. My favorite artists on Jonah Hex have been George Moliterni and José Garcia Lopez and Tony DeZuniga. I admire Jim Aparo very much. I did some stories with Frank Robbins, who I think is a fabulous, fabulous artist. I did some mystery stories with Frank Thorne, whose work I admire very much. Oh, I have a lot of favorite artists.

DAVE: Do you find that if you know who's going to be doing the artwork of the story prior to writing it, and you're familiar with his style, that influences the demands you'll make upon the characters. Like if you know someone is great at drawing panoramas, you'll have a scene where the hero jumps off of a cliff?

MIKE: I don't think so. I don't think I do that. But I do think I sleep better at night if I know the stories are going to go to an artist I admire. Because then you know that the artist will really capture what was intended in the story.

DAVE: Of the particular artists that you just said you like,

you have Frank Robbins on the one hand, whose characters are maybe best described as very angular looking. Many, many right corners where no joints exist. And on the other hand, you have fellows such as Tony DeZuniga, whose work is extremely graceful. Is that showing a conflicting sense of taste on your part?

MIKE: Well, I like a lot of different kinds of things.

DAVE: So there's no image in your mind that "this is a good artist."

MIKE: Oh no. And also, different artists are better-suited, at least better-suited in my view, to different stories. Tony DeZuniga may do one hell of a western. He wouldn't be my favorite artist for a mystery story.

DAVE: When you were working on the Black Orchid, at DC, it had a run in *Adventure* for awhile. That was just prior to the Spectre, wasn't it? Or was there a break in between?

MIKE: I think it was just prior to.

DAVE: Were you the *Adventure* writer at that time. I mean did you keep coming up with new concepts for *Adventure*, or was it just strictly coincidence that you had back-to-back features?

MIKE: Well, I was working very closely with Joe Orlando at the time—who I think was just a dynamite editor and probably the person who did more than anyone else in comics to teach me what comics are all about—and we have a very close rapport, Joe and I. We did a lot of things together. So I wasn't a coincidence, but I was not permanently assigned to *Adventure*, no. We did a lot of things. We did the Sandman, we did the Spectre, we did the Black Orchid. We did a lot of things together.

DAVE: When you were working on the Black Orchid, a big part of her appeal was that you learned little or nothing about her throughout the run of the series. Her powers were never clearly defined, only if you saw her use them, you knew she could fly or that she was semi- if not totally invulnerable, or whatever. You did not know her real life, indeed if she has one, if she has any weaknesses, why she's a superhero. Was it a situation that you wanted to start with the character and then get deeper if the series ran long enough . . . ?

MIKE: Well, remember, the Black Orchid was created by Shelly Mayer, so those ideas were his, or his and Joe Orlando's, and not mine. But yes, it was to be part of the mystique of the character that you not know who she really is. There was no definite secret identity. Remember, she was a woman of a thousand faces, she could assume countless disguises. If there were six women in a story, you never knew which of them was the Black Orchid, or if any of them were. And if the Black Orchid was one of those women, it was never going to be that same woman again in the next issue. The attempt was to do something a little offbeat, something different from the run-of-the-mill. There are so many rules and conventions in super-hero comics, that I was always sympathetic with attempts to break a few of those rules every once in a while. And I like the Black Orchid too. I'm sorry it never made it.

DAVE: Could you envision the Black Orchid if it had been successful with its own title, or if it had just stayed on in *Adventure*, going several years without ever doing the traditional things, of who does she go home to at night, what is she vulnerable to . . . ?

MIKE: No, I think that if the series had gone on for a long time, gradually those things would have had to have become established.

DAVE: In a sense, then, it might have self-destructed?

MIKE: It might have. I mean there's no telling. Have you ever heard of the *Cancelled Comics Calvacade*?

DAVE: No, I haven't.

MIKE: Well, when DC had it's cutbacks in the summer of '78, the staff put out a limited edition, two-volume paperback set of xeroxed books of stories that had been scheduled to see print but which now were not going to be printed. And one of them was a *Sandman* story which I wrote which I was very proud of. When I was a kid, I used to read a back-up series in Dell Comics I think it was, called *Mary Jane and Sniffles*. It was a whimsical, Alice-in-Wonderland style strip about a little girl and a mouse—and I tried to make the *Sandman* a light, whimsical, fantasy series for kids, like *Mary Jane and Sniffles*. I liked the series, and I know other people liked it, but it did not survive.

DAVE: Is *Jonah Hex* basically the only series you've worked on that's been a success?

MIKE: It is the only series I've worked on continuously for so many years. I've written *Jonah Hex* exclusively for eight years now, with the exception of three issues which were written by David Michelinie in 1977. That means I've written more than 70 *Jonah Hex* stories. It's very unusual for a writer to remain on a series for that length of time. I've written the *Ghost Rider* for two years now, and it's successful, but of course it was successful before I arrived on the scene. But *Jonah Hex* is indeed the only series that I've written exclusively over such a long period of time.

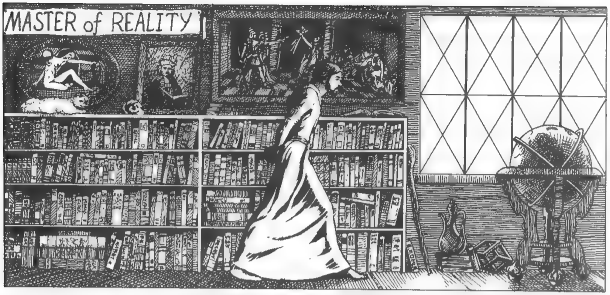
DAVE: Have you had a lot of bad luck with series?

MIKE: Probably no more than anyone else has had. Every writer in comics has been on series that declined and on series that remained strong. It's part of the business.

DAVE: One more question. Are you currently working on any totally new characters?

MIKE: No.

DAVE: Okay. Thanks. You can exhale now.


MASTER of REALITY

I CAN ANSWER ANY QUESTION. I HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LEARN...
...AND YET I STILL HAVE TROUBLED DREAMS..
..VAGUE DOUBTS..
HAS PERFECTION COST ME MY HUMANITY?

WHAT I NEED IS A GOOD LAY!

©'96 OWEN LOVE

The Kirby Experiment

Why Did The Marvel Method Fail At D.C.?

DC THE FOREVER PEOPLE
MAR NO. 1
THE FOREVER PEOPLE
15¢
THEY BELONG TO SUNRISE— THEY'RE HERE IN AMP-DAY— TO WOP THE DARK WORMO OF NIGHT!
OF SUPER TOWN
WAIT! THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU MUST TELL OR HOW TO REACH SUPERTOWN!
TRY THE BOOM TUBE— IF YOU DARE!
BEAUTIFUL DREAMER
AND A BIG BONUS GUEST STAR— SUPERMAN!

by David M. Singer

In 1970, D.C.'s comic books were filled with ads proclaiming "Kirby is coming!" and later "Kirby is here!" To millions of readers, this was a major coup of great portent. Jack "The King" Kirby, as synonymous with Marvel Comics as his long time collaborator Stan Lee, was making the move to D.C.

Jack's first D.C. releases were *New Gods* #1 and *The Forever People* #1 (Both March, 1971). Jack Kirby edited, wrote, and pencilled both those books. The very next month, *Mister Miracle* #1 was released. Once again, Kirby did everything but the inks. (In all three books, Vince Colletta did the inks.)

The following year, D.C. released *Demon* #1 (September, 1972) and *Kamandi* #1 (November, 1972). Mike Royer inked both of these titles.

November, 1973 was the release date for the first Kirby reprint comic. *Black Magic* was a collection of old Kirby and Joe Simon horror story collaborations from the 1950s.

Two new titles were released in 1974. *Omac* (October) and *Sandman* (Winter). Like its predecessors, *Omac* was a Jack Kirby production, with Mike Royer now handling the inking and lettering chores. *Sandman* was pencilled and edited by Jack Kirby, but it was written by Joe Simon. Simon and Kirby, in the 1940s and the 1950s had collaborated to create Mr. Scarlet for Fawcett, Captain America for timely (predecessor to Marvel), and The Boy Commandos and the Newsboy Legion for D.C. As a final touch, the old *Boy Commando* stories were reprinted in a book aptly titled *The Boy Commandos*.

Jack also took control of the *Jimmy Olsen* series, reviving the Newsboy Legion (as the original Newsboy Legion's children), and influenced the new direction of the *Lois Lane* series. Almost overnight, Jack Kirby appeared to have become a deeply entrenched figure at D.C. Collectively these series were referred to as Kirby's Fourth World.

Kirby immediately began establishing a total cosmic unity at D.C. like the one he and Stan Lee had created at Marvel, a decade earlier. The cohesiveness of the Marvel Universe did not simply consist of character cross-overs, team-ups and guest appearances. D.C. had done all that before. Fawcett had done it. Quality Comics had done it. Even Timely had done it.

Nor were villain crossovers a new concept. No, the difference between the Marvel "Universe" and the D.C. style lay in Marvel's realistic, three dimensional approach to its characters, as compared to D.C.'s cutesy, two dimensional heroes and villains.

In a typical Marvel story, if an alien force attacked a Summer resort town where Daredevil was vacationaing as Matt Murdoch, you could be sure that S.H.I.E.L.D., the Fantastic Four, and the Avengers would all be notified, and two or three "free-lance" heroes would drop in to give an assist. If that same alien force landed in a D.C. comic, the Atom, Aquaman, Batman, or whoever, would fight to the end, as if he was Earth's sole protector, rather than call for the assistance of Superman, Green Lantern, or any other one of D.C's more powerful super heroes.

In D.C., the crossover of characters occurs in one of two ways. Either the comic book is set up with a team-up format in mind (*The Brave and the Bold*, *World's Finest*, *D.C. Comics Presents*, *Teen Titans*, *Justice League of America*, etc), or else the entire point of the plot is to team up the heroes, and so the issue's cover will promote this guest appearance.

Copyrighted 1980 David Singer

Marvel on the other hand, allows for crossovers as the natural consequence of having a majority of its super heroes live in the same city (New York). Reed Richards (Mister Fantastic) may appear in a single panel communicating by videophone with Jarvis (Tony Stark and the Avengers' butler). Henry (Yellow Jacket) Pym may be the keynote speaker at a science convention attended by Tony (Iron Man) Stark. This is all possible because Marvel's characters all lead personal lives when they are not out "super heroing". They make love, they drink, they go to the theater. In a word, they are real.

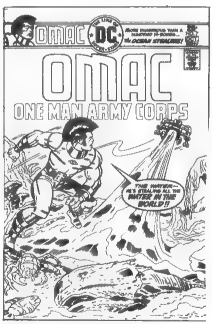
D.C.'s characters, on the other hand, give us the impression that they hibernate in a closet between issues, patiently awaiting their next call to action. With the exception of the notably well fleshed out Bruce Wayne, the only thing we know about D.C. super heroes is that Barry (The Flash) Allen collects comic books.

There are no wasted panels at D.C. If Superman is shown necking with Lois Lane, you know that it is only to set him up so that he will have to rush away because he has spotted an emergency with his telescopic vision. If Green Lantern is shown at work at the Ferris Aircraft company, you know he is going to get hell from his employer, Carol Ferris, because his Green Lantern duties are taking him away from his duties at the company. The private lives of D.C.'s heroes are clichés used to move a story along, rather than an integral part of the stories themselves.

The big difference is that the Marvel formula allows its characters to encounter human problems and grow as people because of them. Wonder Man will get a blind date that drags along her young son. Tony Stark will become an alcoholic. When a D.C. hero has a problem, it is almost always an extension of the character's super hero dual identity.

Kirby's first move was to have Superman appear in the premiere issue of *The Forever People*. In true Marvel style, Superman is not teamed up with them to combat a menace, but because he seeks them out as fellow super beings.

In a rare insight into the man inside the supersuit, Kirby makes Clark Kent (Not Superman, but Clark Kent!) a lonely, potentially paranoid figure, unsure as to his standing with mere mortals. "What does Superman mean to you, down there?" He looks out of his office window and down at the people milling in the street below. "do they secretly resent him? Fear him? Hate him? For the first time in many



years, I feel that I'm alone. Alone," Note that he refers to Superman (himself) in the third person singular. Not only is he bordering on paranoia, but Kirby is throwing in a healthy case of schizophrenia, as well.

In a single issue, many readers learned more about Clark Kent/Superman, than they had after reading 40 years of *Action*, *Superman*, and *World's Finest*. The only problem with this was that it was all a bit too sudden. Out of nowhere, Mr. Take Charge is sounding like Peter Parker.

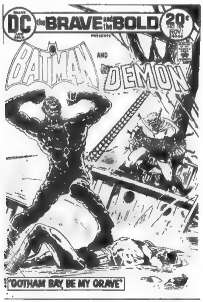
In the *Lois Lane* and *Jimmy Olsen* comics, Kirby, via the creation of Morgan Edge and the GBS, brings the entire Superman family into his Fourth World. Those features which did not specifically include the Superman family, such as *Omac* and *Kamandi* were linked via the knowledge that Omac set in Earth's future preceeds the Great Disaster by 45 years or so, (*Kamandi* #59, September-October, 1978) while Kamandi was born shortly after the Great Disaster (*Kamandi* #1).

Seven new titles with all new material, two new titles with reprint material, one old title made over as if new, and two or three old titles tangentially affected and influenced by Kirby's Fourth World, all within a period of 3½ years. Where did

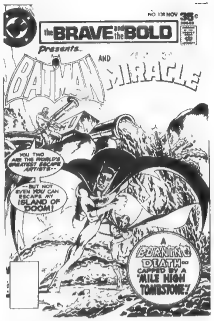
DC GIANT
THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD
BATMAN AND KAMANDI
THE LAST BOY ON EARTH
"THIS EARTH IS MINE"
EXTRA! THE SECRET 6 "PLUNDER OF THE PENTAGON"

all this go wrong?

The problem was that D.C became two different companies. There was Kirby's Fourth World, and then there was the traditional D.C. line of comic books. If Kirby wasn't the editor of a title, that title's characters appeared not to be aware of the new characters introduced by Kirby. Apokolips may have been waging an intergalactic war, but Hawkman, Green Lantern and Adam Strange never knew about it. Eventually, Kamandi would be teamed up with Batman in *The Brave And The Bold*, but by that point he was being treated as a typical D.C. hero, and the team up was strained and unsuccessful.



D.C. refused to allow its magazines to become single parts of a larger whole, but expected Kirby to weave his magic and produce gold for them without violating thirty years of tradition. With rare exceptions, each D.C. comic book story is considered a separate unit from all other stories.


THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD
Presents... BATMAN AND MIRACLE
YOU TWO ARE THE WORLD'S GREATEST SECRET ARTISTS!
BUT NOW EVEN YOU CAN'T STOP ME AND MY DOOM!
A STARTLING DEATH and CAPTURE AT A MILE HIGH TOMBSTONE!

A reader given two different issues of Superman, or of Aquaman, or of any other comic book title, will be unable, in most cases to say which one was the older

DC THE DEMON
APART MAN--PART ELEMENTAL FURY!! HE STALKS THE DARK OF NIGHT IN SEARCH OF FEARFUL ENEMIES!
NOW ONLY 20¢
THE DEMON
INTRODUCING... JACK KIRBY'S STARTLING NEW EPIC--The ORIGIN of the DEMON!

of the two. A D.C. comic may go three years or more without any changes of note. Each issue simply tells us of the latest challenge to the heroes abilities. How does Green Lantern help Orion or Mr. Miracle in the war against Apokolips in one issue, and then ignore this major threat to Earth's security in the following issue, so that he can stop Sonar from stealing an airplane? D.C. never resolved this problem.

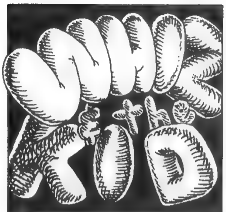
If you wish to treat your comics as if they are all taking place in the same world, then a world shaking crisis affecting one hero should in most cases affect all your heroes. Kirby was not prepared to end the "War with Apokolips" in a half dozen issues, and D.C. was not prepared to immerse its entire comic line in a massive and prolonged battle with the forces of Apokolips. Eventually, Kirby's Fourth World, like Kirby, became isolated from the rest of the D.C. line. With its appeal too specialized, the readership never lived up to D.C.'s expectations when they lured Kirby away from Marvel.

Normally, a new character can be nurtured along. Get him a guest spot with the Justice League of America, or have him appear in *The Brave And The Bold*. But Kirby's charactrs were an all or nothing proposition. If Mr. Miracle teamed up with Batman, it was as a slick escape artist, and not as godling. But ironically, if Mr. Miracle didn't guest appear in the more established magazines, he failed to get the necessary exposure.

Comic book publishing companies are not merely collections of writers, artists, letterers, and colorists. They have personalities of their own. D.C. has its style, and Marvel has its own, different style. By necessity, Marvel publishes certain comics in the D.C. style. *Star Wars* and *Battlestar Galactica* are two such examples. These, by the very nature of their storylines, do not allow for a meshing with the rest of the Marvel Universe. But even such an offbeat comic such as *Godzilla* was finally integrated into the Marvel Universe.

You can hire the world's greatest quarterback, but if you hire him to pitch for the New York Yankees he will fail. The Marvel method didn't exactly fail at D.C., it was never put into action.

HE SEEKS DEATH! HE DEFIES MAN!
NO TRAP CAN HOLD HIM!
MISTER MIRACLE
SUPER ESCAPE ARTIST
MY ENEMIES THINK THAT ESCAPE FROM THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. BUT THEY'RE IN FOR A LIFE SHOCK!
THE MAKING OF A LEGEND!!
GOODBYE, MISTER MIRACLE! YOU LOST YOUR WAGER AND YOUR LIFE!



Welcome to the first issue of The Comic Times. The editors have asked me to try and stump fandom, so every month I'll be back with a new set of questions to muddle your medulla.

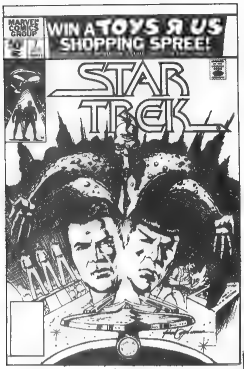
This time around, let us look at some Famous Addresses. Your mission should you decide to accept it, is to come up with the inhabitant for each of the places listed below. Some will be easy some a little harder. But all are well known.

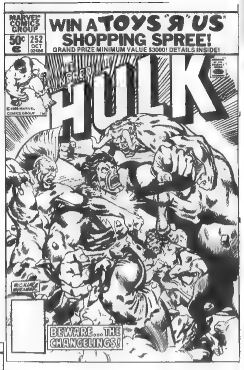
And remember, keep those cards and letters coming with your own bits of trivia. After this quiz, you should know that our address is Whiz & The Kid, c/o this magazine.

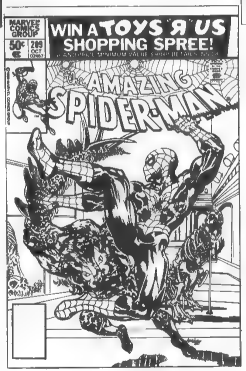
Answers on page 77.

1) *221-B Baker Street, London*
2) *311 Clinton Ave.*
3) *Skull Island.*
4) *0001 N. Cemetery Ridge.*
5) *704 Hauser Street,*
6) *1313 Mockingbird Lane.*
7) *1101 Coast Road, California.*
8) *Wee Jon Boo, Korea (Excuse the spelling. Just sound it out.)*
9) *Underhill, The Shire.*
10) *Galahad Glen, the U.S. of A. (Admittedly a real toughie.)*

MARVEL CHECK LIST




MARVEL COMICS GROUP
WIN A TOYS 'R' US SHOPPING SPREE!
GRAND PRIZE MINIMUM VALUE $5000! DETAILS INSIDE!
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
BEWARE... THE CHANGELING!



MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #68

Script by Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio. Art by Ron Wilson and Gene Day. The Thing and the high-flying *Angel* trapped in the Toad's Castle of Tefror

SPIDER-WOMAN #31

Written by Michael Fleisher. Pencils by Steve Leialoha. What is the terrible *secret* of Spider-Woman's newest - and most dangerous - foe... the Hornet?

STAR TREK #7

Written by Michael Fleisher. Art by Leo Duranona. Kirk and the Enterprise crew must look on helplessly as Spock and McCoy are caught in the middle of tribal war on a far flung planet!

MACHINE MAN #17

Script by Tom DeFalco. Art by Steve Ditko. Will even Machine Man's amazing arsenal be enough to stop the chilling Ms. Macabre?

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #92

An encore presentation of Hulk #141, written by Thomas with art by Trimpe and J. Severin. Psychiatrist Leonard Samson siphons part of the Hulk"s gamma-powered strength into himself - and uses it to challenge the green Golliath!

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #208

Script by Denny O'Neil. Pencils by Alan Weiss. Kraven the Hunter goes straight - so how come he's attacking Spidey more fiercely than ever?

CAPTAIN AMERICA #250

Written by Roger Stern. Art by John Byrne and Joe Rubinstein. " *Captain America for President!*"

MICRONAUTS #22

Script by Bill Mantlo. Art by Pat Broderick and Armando Gil. Cover by Michael Golden. There's a Big Mac Attack like you've never seen when the Micronauts take on "The Best Darn Burglar in the Whole Wide World!" In a MacDonald's! Then Tales of the Microverse features Slug and Price Argon on the trail of evil-doers in the Body Banks of Home-world!

GHOST RIDER #49

Script by Michael Fleisher. Art by Don Perlin. To save an Indian village from total destruction, the Ghost Rider must overcome an ancient curse as well as a bunch of the meanest cutthroats you ever saw!

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA #20

Written and penciled by Walt Simonson inks by Klaus Janson. Eurayle leads her entire Scavenge World army in an attack on the Galac-

tica. Her aim: get Starbuck back! And don't miss her showdown with Apollo!

THOR #300

Script by Mark Gruenwald and Ralph Macchio. Pencils by Keith Pollard. This is it! The double-sized 300th anniversary issue you mythology mavens have been waiting for! See the incredible climax of the saga of the Ring of Power! Learn the secrets of the Eternals!

And wait'll you see how everything fits together - and the shattering effect it all has on the Thunder God's life!

AVENGERS #200

Written by David Michelinie with pencils by George Perez. A double-sized doozy of a 200th anniversary issue! Ms. Marvel gives birth at last - but to what!? And what strange fate befalls Carol Danvers after that blessed event? Plus, a special-bonus solo tale of Jarvis.

SAVAGE SHE-HULK #9

Story by David Kraft. Art by Mike Vosburg and Chic Stone. The menace of the cult ruled with a silver tongue and an iron fist

MARVEL COMICS GROUP
50¢
OCT 1986
WIN A TOYS 'R' US SHOPPING SPREE!
GRAND PRIZE MINIMUM VALUE $5000! DETAILS INSIDE!
THE SAVAGE
SHE-HULK
I CAN'T FIGHT HIS NUMBERS - THE SHE-HULK IS TAKING OVER!

by the madman called... the Word!

FUN AND GAMES #14

The best company for a rainy day - or even a nice one. Super hero puzzles, mazes, word-games and lots more to delight and excite you.

DOCTOR STRANGE #43

Written by Chris Claremont. Pencils by Gene Colan. Inks by Dan Green. Cover by Michael Golden. In the Land of the Black Mirror, Doc Strange and Clea battle to save Wong - and themselves!

HULK #252

Story by Bill Mantlo. Art by Sal Buscema. Who could make the green Goliath his helpless prisoner? Woodgod, that's who! How? You gotta read it to find out!

CONAN #215

Written by Roy Thomas. Art by John Buscema and Ernie Chan. It looks like Anniversary Month here at the House of Ideas! This double-sized spectacular marks ten continuous years of the world's first and foremost barbarian comic mag! And

just for the occasion, our hot-blooded Cimmerian teams up with none other than the she-devil with a sword Red Sonja! Don't miss it!

MARVEL TALES #120

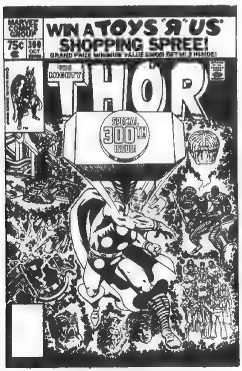
Re-presenting Spider-Man #143 with script by Conway, pencils by Andru, and inks by Giacoia and Hunt. Spidey vs. Cyclone for the lives of JJJ and Robbie!

MARVEL'S GREATEST COMICS #93

A rhapsodic re-presentation of Fantastic Four #113. Story by Lee. Art by J. Buscema and Sinnott. The final fate of Ben Grimm! And - the coming of... Over-Mind!

X-MEN #138

Story by Chris Claremont. Art by John Byrne and Terry Austin. Cyclops and Phoenix's shocking depature from the team sets the stage for an unforgetable all-new retelling of the history of the X-Men.



TALES TO ASTONISH #11

A repeat production of Sub-Mariner #11. Written by Thomas. Art by Colan and Klein. Prince Namor on a devastating rampage against Captain Barracuda and a whole blamed U.S. Navy post!

ROM #17

Script by Bill Mantlo. Art by Sal Buscema. Cover by Michael Golden. Fighting to retrieve his Neutralizer, Rom becomes the prisoner of the Dire Wraiths. Plus - a surprise ending that'll leave you gasping!

DEFENDERS #88

Script by Ed Hannigan. Art by Don Perlin and Pablo Marcos. The Hulk fights the Russians in defense of - whales? Plus: Nighthawk returns (it's legal this time): a drama-drenched skyjacking; and - Hellcat's mother! All in one story - no kidding!

dark, dangerous city - the all-new Prowler strikes! It's *not* what you'd expect.

WHAT IF #23

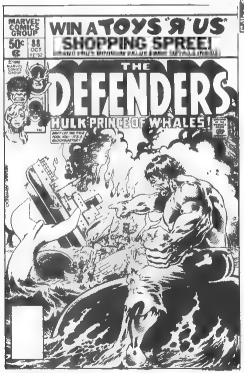
Plot by Steven Grant. The Watcher opens the door to another fascinating alternate reality: *"What If the Incredible Hulk lived in the time of King Arthur?"*

MARVEL TEAM-UP # 98

Written, penciled, and inked by Alan Kupperberg. Replicus is back and even the formidable team of Spider-Man and Thor might not be able to stop him!

IRON MAN #139

Script by David Michelinie. Art by Bob Layton Madame Masque re-appears on the scene - and she's out for blood! And just so Shell-Head doesn't get bored, the sinsiter Spymaster drops in for a visit, too!



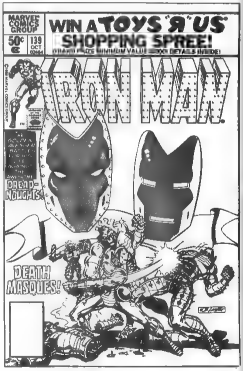
MARVEL ANNUALS

FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #16

Not one but two tales to tantalize you this year. First, a story written by Doug Moench with pencils by George Perez in which Reed Richards and Captain Marvel face the Skrull warrior elite... the Prime Ten (with a special treat for time-paradox aficionadoes)! Then, our second tale, written by Moench with art by Tom Sutton features - after two long years - the return of Doctor Victor Von Doom! And what a return it is!

SGT. FURY #160

A battle-born reprint of Captain Savage #11, written by G. Friedrich with art by Ayers and Shores. The Howlers and the Leatherneck Raiders team up to kidnap an enemy atomic physicist from an impregnable Japanese stronghold!



POWER-MAN AND IRON FIST #65

Story by Mary Jo Duffy. Pencils by Kerry Gammill. The Power-Fist team fails victim to an overpowering sneak attack by El Aguila and his blistering bio-electric blasts!

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #47

Story by Roger Stern. Art by Marie Severin and Steve Mitchell. Somewhere in the

AMAZING ADVENTURES #11

Re-presenting the 1st half of X-Men #6. *"Sub-Mariner Joins the Evil Mutants!"*, written by Lee art by Kirby and Stone. And don't miss our spot-light on the Beast (from X-Men #48) written by Drake with art by Roth and Verpoorten.

STAR WARS #40

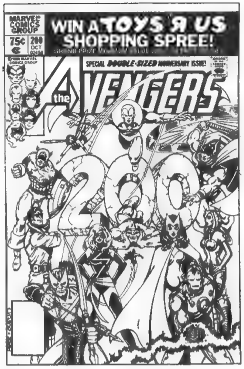
Written by Archie Goodwin. Art by Al Williamson and Carlos Garzon. Part III of The Empire Strikes Back, containing some material not seen in Marvel Super Special #16 or in the paperback!

MASTER OF KUNG FU #93

Story by Doug Moench. Art by Mike Zeck and Gene Day. Black Jack Tarr reunites with Shang Chi and Leiko Wu in Chinatown to begin their most intriguing adventure ever!

MARVEL SUPER-ACTION #24

Originally presented in Avengers #63. Story by Thomas with art by Colan and Klein. Introducing... the new Goliath! Plus: the Black Widow's secret mission.



FANTASTIC FOUR #223

Story by Doug Moench. Art by Bill Sienkiewicz and Joe Sinnott. *"That A Child May Live!"* The FF, the man called Gabriel, and Agatha Harkness battle to save the possessed Franklin Richards from Nicholas Scratch and Salem's Seven!

FANTASY MASTERPIECES #11

A regal reprinting of Silver Surfer #11, *"O Bitter Victory!"* Story by Lee; art by J. Buscema and Adkins. Plus, from Strange Tales #181, *Adam Warlock* battles the Magus, the Matriarch and... himself in *"1000 Clowns!"*, written and penciled by Jim Starlin with inking by Al Milgrom.

MARVEL PREMIERE #56

Script by David Michelinie. Art by Howard Chaykin and Terry Austin. *"The Big Top Barter Resolution!"*, in which Dominic Fortune makes his color comics debut. Fortune - Marvel's 1930's brigand-for-hire - and Dum Dum Dugan (in his pre-Howler, pre-SHIELD days) encounter mucho trouble in a corrupt carnival!

CRAZY #66

You'll laugh, you'll howl, you'll fall over and foam at the mouth when you read this sensational collection of comedy by Steve Skeates, Mary Wilshire, Mike Pellowsky, Marie Severin, Bill Mantlo, Pat Broderick, Mark Bilgram, Michael Sullivan, Peter Bramley, Len Wein, Virgil Diamond, Alan Kupperberg, Don Perlin, Paul Kupperberg, Bob McLeod, Ramona Fradon, Ned Sontag and whoever else we can cram in!

HOWARD THE DUCK #7

Story by Bill Mantlo. Art by Gene Colan and Dave Simons. In the wilds of Florida's Everglades, Howard, Bev, and the uncanny Man-Thing find themselves trapped in a city that is in reality... a giant Monopoly board! Also: the second install-ment of Street People written by Lynn Graeme with art by Ned Sontag. Our four outrageous children of the Sixties get involved in a terroist plot to blow up a bank. It's wild! And - a portfolio of our daffy drake in a diverse variety of settings as imagined by John Byrne, Walt Simonson, John Romita, Marie Severin, and Howard Chaykin.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #56

Script by Roy Thomas. Art by John Buscema and Tony DeZuniga. The first part of Marvel's adapta-tion of Andrew J. Offutt's novel. *"Conan and the Sword of Skelos!"*, featur-ing Conan's peril-laden hunt for the evil wizard, Zafra!

ANSWERS TO WHIZ & THE KID

1. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson
2. Clark Kent's apartment building
3. King Kong, before moving to his New York City address
4. The Addams Family
5. Archie and Edith Bunker
6. Herman and Lily Munster, and Family
7. Harry Orwell
8. M*A*S*H
9. Frodo Baggins
10. Crusader Rabbit and Ragland T. Tiger. (We told you it was a toughie!)

AN INTERVIEW WITH A NEW TALENT

JOE JUSKO

BY MARK GASPER

Mark: Where are you from?

Joe: I was born here in New York, 21 years ago on the Lower East Side, which is affectionately referred to as jungle habitat. I still live there.

Mark: Is it really as rough as its supposed to be?

Joe: I've lived there all my life, so I've grown used to it and never had any problems. I guess if anybody's going to bug me I grew up with them an they're an old friend of mine. But it has gotten progressively worse over the last few years.

Mark: Living on the lower east side must have helped you with all the violence in comics, the fight scenes . . .

Joe: My brother was nine years older than me and he used to take care of me and it was he who introduced me around at the schoolyard. It was here that I saw my first comic, the first Vison comic, (*Avengers* 56), drawn by Buscema. I went through it and it blew me away completely. The comic was incredible, there was no comparison to any of the other stuff around. Up until now Buscema is still one of my favorite artists and his work is one of the tings that bugged me to draw. I'd break alot of pencils and I used to quit all the time, but I dedicated myself. I just loved doing comics and I'd use whatever I could to keep drawing.

Mark: That's like Jack Kirby drawing on the sidewalks with chalk.

Joe: Yeah. It came down to that. I'd draw 6 and 8 foot tall Spider-Mans on the walls of buildings. I left my mark all over the city. It was a lot of fun.

The good thing about it was that by the time I went to school, at St. Richard's down on Centre St. and Ave B, the general attitude toward a business career had changed a lot. I had more or less determined to pursue an art career and as a matter-of-fact my teachers pushed me into it. By the time I got there, there were more teachers than nuns and they pushed me to pursue art. I got out of a lot of assignments by contributing to things like bulleting boards. So art became a bit of an asset.

Mark: After grammer school, you went to Art and Design. I guess there was more of a classical art philosophy there?

Joe: No, not really. They didn't teach comics but they did give you a commercial art training. When you start out, the first year you are given only 2 periods a day, the rest is academic. They put you thru the basics like perspective, color and composition. It was all stuff that I was familiar with already. I drew every spare minute I had. I drew and drew and drew.

And I was thinking about taking cartooning because I was still very interested in comics. The Art Chairman told me not to take cartooning because there wasn't anything there for me. The focus on the course was on political cartooning. I took their advice and took illustration and everything worked out fine.

The last teacher I had senior year was Bernie Krigstein. Which blew me away. He would never admit to anyone that he did comics. One day he saw my stuff and we got to talking and he admitted that "Oh yeah, he had worked in comics." Then he started talking about Wally Wood and the others. He got into this whole rap about the days of EC. He was a really nice guy. A hard teacher.

Mark: What did he tell you about the business?

Joe: He never got into that much, he just said it was fun doing comics. He said that he had tried to do something different using composition, style and technique. Besides drawing, the main thing he pushed was different pen techniques. I would sit there wanting to work my way. He'd insist that I try to do it in cross-hatching. I hated cross-hatching. But we got along, there was a mutual respect between us. After a while, I did buckle down and do the drawings in cross-hatching but they were really bad.

But he never got into talking about the business, he just said that it was fun when he got serious about art, he left.

Mark: You're someone who's starting in the business now . . . .

Joe: I've been on my own for about a year and a half. Before that I worked for Howie Chaykin.

Mark: Let's go back to when Joe Jusco decided to try to break into comics. You're a talented person coming out of one of the finest art schools in New York, probably in the country. You're about 18 years of age. You haven't been to college. How did you get into comics

Joe: When I finally graduated I still had never painted before. All I had done was comics and illustration. The summer I graduated I won an award for cartooning from DC Comics, a $25.00 gift certificate of art supplies from a store.

Mark: Did you win a contest?

Joe: It wasn't a contest. Every year DC gives out an award in Art & Design to the most outstanding comic book artist that graduated that year. I missed getting the award for the best illustrator because my work was a little to far out for the older teachers in the school.

But I decided that I didn't want to do comics anymore. I knew my attention span was a little shorter than 20 or 25 pages, so I got serious about painting. I used the gift certificate to buy canvas boards and oil paints. And I started working in oils. I really didn't know what I was doing. I started working on the wrong side of the canvas. I didn't sand it down. My first painting was a barbarian painting which is better left buried. It didn't work out well, I approached working in oils the way you would in ink. I didn't realize that you work light to dark, I was working dark to light. It didn't look very good.

I decided I didn't like oils. I wanted to work in watercolors. So I went out and bought illustration board and I did a line drawing. I just started working in watercolors and inks. At the time I didn't think it was a really great painting. Halfway through it, I was going to destroy it, and go on to something else. But I finished it up. It worked out half-way decent. After that I did one more oil painting. It was a figure of a woman holding a baby in this city with werewolves perched, ready to pounce on her. And that again was so-so.

And I was in a comic store one day I had mentioned to the owner that I drew. He saw some of my stuff and then introduced me to Howie Chaykin who was a friend of his. So Howie liked my work and at the time was looking for an assistant, so I began working for Howie. That's how I started, from there I went to *Heavy Metal* and then Marvel. He predicted that in 6 months I wouldn't be working for him any more. And he hit it on the head, 6 months later I was working for *Heavy Metal*.

Freelancing is very tough. When I was first starting out, one of the things that didn't deter me was talking to Howie. He'd tell me how Wrightson, Jones and him would all share a studio and live on Spaghettios for months at a time to make ends meet.

It's one of the things that kept me from moving from home. I'd like to get my own place because my studio is constantly expanding. But financially it's hard when you first start out. As good as you are, people don't want to trust you with very heavy assignments. You have to build up to that.

I don't know if I was lucky or talented but I got some fairly good assignments. While I didn't botch them, I don't think I did as good a job as I'm cabable of. I fell into the groove of working Marvel-style instead of working Jusco-style.

Mark: What is the Marvel-style of cover paintings?

Joe: Marvel-style is a painted comic book. It's not composed as a painting, it's a comic book scene that's done as a painting. Which doesn't work all the time. The designs I worked with, came from Marie Severin, who is basically a comic book artist. They were comic book layouts. No matter how I tried to make them look like a painting, they looked like a comic book panel that was painted.

I think I work better when I compose the painting myself. I compose it more the way a picture would look, instead of a comic book panel.

When I compose, I still follow the Marvel-formula. The main character is the biggest thing on the page and everything else is small in comparison.

Mark: You implied that the life of a free-lance artist is difficult. What are some of the problems you face?

Joe: Freelancing is tough because you always wonder where the next job is coming from. It's not a 9 to 5 job, you don't always get a paycheck at the end of the week.

You have to hustle to get the job in on time and you have to hustle to get another job. A lot of times when I went back to Marvel, after I had finished a cover, there wasn't another cover waiting for me. They have other artists working for them.

Mark: Is it a matter of luck who gets any given assignment?

Joe: Most of the time it's a matter of who gets there first. A couple of times I've walked up to Marvel with a cover and they told me that it's too bad I wasn't there yesterday because we had this cover and Bob Larkin was here so he got the job.

So it works . . .

A lot of times in freelancing it's a first-come, first served thing, unless they call you up specifically for a job. I'm getting to that point where they've seen enough of my stuff and they'll call me.

I take anything that's given to me, you have to when you're first starting out. If you become picky, it gives you a bad reputation. Also no matter what you're working on, you have to approach it with the same enthusiasm. You can't allow a letdown to show up in your work. One thing about the market, you're only as good as your last painting, until you get to superstar status.

Mark: Do you think the cover is a big determining factor in sales?

Joe: Yes I think so in a lot of cases. It was one of their better selling magazines. I couldn't figure out why. It might have been the subject matter.

The issue before was also a Star-Lord cover, and it had a Jim Starlin cover. It didn't sell real well for some reason. I thought Starlin's was a better job than mine. Mine was really atrocious and it printed even worse. I don't know if there was a sudden surge of interest in Star-Lord or perhaps it was my cover.

Mark: With your fine art training, have you had a great deal of difficulty adapting your painting for reproduction? Has it been difficult to prepare a painting for mass printing?

Joe: Each company has a different printing process. They pick up different things. One of the first paintings I did for *Heavy Metal (June, 1978)* was a watercolor and they shot right through it. The original is quite striking; it's very dramatic, the lighting stands out, the highlights on her stand out.

When they printed it, everything washed, everything took on one cohesive tonal quality. It brightened up, washed out and simply didn't have the dramatic effect that it had.

It was very popular as a cover, but it didn't look anywhere near as good as the original. That cover incidentally was banned in England. They felt it was too sexist or too pornographic or something.

LUZKO
'80

Mark: Do you feel restricted in your use of color because of comics' reliance on sharp contrasts, rather than subtle gradations?

Joe: Comics are supposed to be very bright and have eye-catching color. Sometimes, depending on the subject matter, that kind of color doesn't work.

When I first started, my colors were very muted and monotoned. My paintings were either very blue or very brown. A lot of times it didn't work.

I was told, "You got to have more contrast, more color. We like lights against darks and darks against lights. It's got to pop."

Pop was the word.

What I do now is highlight everything I do. A lot of times it may not work, but you must highlight everything or else it flattens out. You have to use very bright colors, very huge contrasts. A lot of times the color muddies up. Comic book printing is not the greatest in the world.

Mark: And you work with the highest quality comic book printing: full-color paintings on slick paper, rather than newsprint.

Joe: A lot of times it still doesn't carry over. For instance I did a cover for *The Rampaging Hulk*, the Three Mile Island issue. The sky in the background was an early evening sky, very blue, purple with magentas. It looked really nice in the original.

But when it was printed, to make the Hulk more green, they dropped blue out. So blue was dropped out of the background, and the background became very pale and nondescript. You wouldn't notice it unless you saw the original, but it's the sort of little things you have to watch out for.

Mark: Is there a different policy regarding the rights of paintings from interior art?

Joe: No, you get the painting back, but the copyright is Marvel's. You sign over the rights forever to the painting. You get nothing out of it. That's the way it is.

Epic is an exception. Marvel retains the copyright for 18 months or two years, I forget which. *Heavy Metal* works the same way. If they put it out as a poster, you get royalities and a certain percentage of the profits from the poster. It works out fine.

Mark: Who are your major influences as an artist?

Joe: As a youngster I wasn't exposed to the different "golden-age" illustrators. I don't even remember seeing a comic until I saw a John Buscema comic. He became my hero immediately. His stuff looked so much better even at 6 or 7 years old. It just looked right. It looked like he could draw. So I started copying his stuff. Buscema just fit the way I wanted to draw. Until I got to high school, I was never aware of the Golden Age of Illustrators. I didn't take Art History in school.

When I started painting, Frazetta was an influence, Boris had just started out. I liked Boris' work because it was very tight. I work very tight. I feel like I have to make the painting as clear and as tight as possible.

When I started working for Howie Chaykin I first started getting exposed to Robert Fawcett, Howard Pyle and Bob Peak. Bob Peak is one of my favorite illustrators now. Completely different from the way I draw. But I'm amazed at his control of his technique and his style. His ability to show what he wants in just one initial color.

Mark: What do you prefer doing, painting or comics?

Joe: Painting. I'm a lot more comfortable when I can fully render something. I think my line work leaves a lot to be desired. I have a decent control of a brush and I tend to over-render everything with a pen.

Mark: Are you more interested in telling a story through pictures, or illustration?

Joe: I still find telling a story fun. Pencilling I can do pretty quickly, I'm good at breaking down a story. But when I start to ink, I slow down.

Would I want to do a strip? I don't think so. I was asked by Marvel if I want to do a regular strip. I turned them down. I don't think I could keep my attention and enthusiasm on 20 pages a month.

Right now I live with my parents. The money isn't the major factor. For me, it's turning out real quality work.

Mark: This is your real chance to do it.

Joe: Yeah, I'll reach a point latter on when the bills get tougher and I'll have to get the stuff out faster then I want to. Right now I'm sitting around and playing with the stuff.

Right now, I'm doing a John Busema story that I'm finishing up for *Bizarre Adventures*. It's based on a painting I did for a poster. I wasn't even offered the job, I asked to do it. The pencils where fairly tight, there was enough to work from. I'm painting the entire story more or less.

All they really wanted was a wash. I got carried away and I started painting the entire thing. It's more than what was expected from me, But it'll work out for me in the long run, because it'll show people what I can do.

Mark: What's your advice to young artists who want to get into comics?

Joe: I think that you must be completely honest when you evaluate your work. You can't say you're great, when you really don't think you are and be disappointed when they refuse you.

When you first start you must be open to critism, you'll get a lot of it. You have to keep working, there's no way you can draw one day a week and expect to get somewhere. You need constant practice. It paid off for me, it really did.

The only advice I can give is that if you really feel the stuff is good enough, go somewhere else. I know people who've gone to one company, been shot down and then sold work at another company. It's a matter of opinion.

Mark: Do you feel that there's a standard among all of the younger artists in comics, that you have to meet?

Joe: You look up to these people, these are the pros. When you're not working in the field, these people get to be sort of Gods. Once you finally get to know them, they're artists that you want to impress.

The acknowledgement that I did good work was something I needed to boost my confidence, to let me know I had a chance to make it. Every positive thing that happened helped my confidence.

Everybody who's worked no matter what they say, still needs that certain ego boost every now and then. The feelings worthwhile.

After a while of course I set about to impress myself. What was important was what *I* felt about the work. The constant push to make it better is what it's all about, you know you're getting paid for it, but you want to make it better.

COMIC BOOKS

TV Guides, TV, Movie, Monster & Science Fiction Magazines, Playboys, James Bond, Doc Savage, The Shadow, Gum Cards, Star Trek, Hardcover & Pocket Books, Original Art, Radio & Cereal Premiums, Disney, Diana Rigg, Records, Toys, Games, Pulps, Big Little Books, Movie & Serial Pressbooks, Posters, Lobby Cards, Photos, Patrick McGoohan, Comic Sections, Etc.

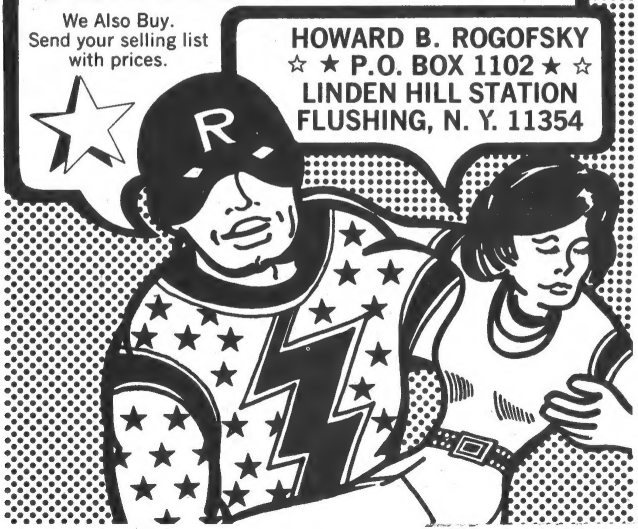
FOR SALE from 1900-1980

SEND $ .75 FOR 2 GIANT CATALOGS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

We Also Buy.
Send your selling list with prices.

HOWARD B. ROGOFSKY
☆ ★ P.O. BOX 1102 ★ ☆
LINDEN HILL STATION
FLUSHING, N. Y. 11354



Copyright 1980 Marvel Comics Group